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Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Fiber Arts Oral History Series

Katherine Westphal

ARTIST AND PROFESSOR

With an Introduction by
Jo Ann C. Stabb

An Interview Conducted by
Harriet Nathan
in 1984

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral history is a modern research technique involving an interviewee and an informed interviewer in spontaneous conversation. The taped record is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The resulting manuscript is typed in final form, indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley and other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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KATHERINE WESTPHAL

1979

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PREFACE

The Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library selects as memoirists persons who have played important roles in the development of the western community. Since the beginning of the oral history program, artists in many fields have taken their place among the memoirists. When the art of handweaving went through an upheaval during the 1950's, fiber artists gained new recognition, and developed novel ways of using fiber as a means of individual expression. The creativity of fiber artists has won them a significant place in the complex of artistic activity, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area, and has established the importance of their development and history.

The emergence of the Bay Area as a center for the fiber arts was stimulated by a number of influences including those of faculty members at the University of California at Berkeley and at Davis. Departments of Decorative Art and of Design at Berkeley were led for many years by Professor Charles Edmund (Ed) Rossbach, now Emeritus, who was the first memoirist in the oral history series on Fiber Arts. At the Davis campus, Katherine Westphal (Rossbach), Professor of Design, gave strong and innovative leadership in the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences from 1966 until her retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1979. Significant leaders in the Bay Area also included, among many others, such renowned fiber artists as the late Trude Guermonprez, who taught at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland; and the late Dorothy Wright Liebes, whose San Francisco studio generated innovative fiber concepts and designs for industry.

Katherine Westphal provides the second oral history memoir in the series on Fiber Arts in the San Francisco Bay Area, a series designed to include artists whose work indicates some of the variety the fiber arts movement has generated. Trained in painting, Professor Westphal uses her knowledge of art history, taste for travel, and appreciation of other cultures to expand the range of possibilities in art. Her work is widely acclaimed and appreciated. It includes embellishment of surfaces by means of embroidery, painting, drawing, printing, the use of heat transfers, the making and use of handmade paper, and the creation of collages that manipulate similar images so as to reveal intriguing variations. As a speaker, teacher, writer, and artist, she extends her interest in the visual world to include the most ancient and esoteric art and artifacts, the simplest leaf, and the possibilities inherent in the most modern copying machines. She draws on the world of art and experience both in her creations and the design classes that grew from a handful of students to hundreds that would fill lecture halls to capacity.

Members of the Fiber Arts Advisory Committee have provided valuable advice in the development of the series. The committee includes Hazel V.

Bray, Curator of Crafts (retired), Oakland Museum; Gyöngy Laky, Professor of Design, University of California at Davis; Cecile McCann, Publisher and Editor-In-Chief, Artweek; Frank A. Norick, Principal Museum Anthropologist, Lowie Museum, UC Berkeley; Ed Rossbach, Emeritus Professor of Architecture (Design), UC Berkeley; Carol Sinton, Fiber Artist, San Francisco; Katherine Westphal, Emeritus Professor of Design, UC Davis; and James D. Hart, Emeritus Professor of English, and Director of The Bancroft Library.

The oral history process at the University of California, Berkeley, consists of tape-recorded interviews with persons who have been important in the development of the west. The purpose of oral history memoirs is to capture and preserve for future research the perceptions, recollections, and observations of these individuals. Research and preparation of a topic outline precede the interview sessions. The outline is prepared in conjunction with close associates and other persons in the memoirist's field, as well as with the memoirist, who in turn may use the suggestions as aids to memory, choose among them, or add new topics.

The tape-recorded interviews are transcribed, lightly edited by the interviewer, and reviewed and approved by the memoirist. An index and photographs are added. Final processing includes final typing, photo-offset reproduction, binding, and deposit in The Bancroft Library and other selected libraries and collections. The volumes do not constitute publications, but are primary research material made available under specified conditions for the use of researchers.

The Fiber Arts series is supported by grants from the Mina Schwabacher Fund and a donation from the Friends of The Bancroft Library. The philanthropies of the late Mina Schwabacher have included support for hospital programs that serve children, as well as scholarship bequests to Whitman College in her birthplace at Walla Walla, Washington. The Mina Schwabacher Fund was a gift to the University of California at Berkeley in honor of her brother Frank, who was a loyal alumnus and supporter of the University. The Regional Oral History Office acknowledges with appreciation the generous and essential support for the project.

The Regional Oral History Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum, Division Head
Regional Oral History Office

Harriet Nathan, Project Head
Fiber Arts Series

March 1988
Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

I have known Katherine Westphal Rossbach for 20 years, almost half my life. She was my colleague on the faculty of the Design program at the University of California, Davis, from 1968 to 1979, where she initiated me into the ways of academia. Above all, she is my friend with whom I have shared many wonderful conversations and experiences.

As a teacher, she had a unique way of making the whole process of learning an exciting, creative event. Perhaps these memories are the strongest because I realize how much I had to learn as a new junior faculty member. She could engage the most casual student with her enthusiasm and love for textiles. They got her message. Art and creativity were a part of everyday life. Even the most mundane task had its potential to be transformed into part of the creative process. I also learned that play and humor were major aspects of this process and that her imagination was not bound by "the system." In the most unexpected ways, she brought the human element into the institutional setting.

This was during the era of the Vietnam War, the late 1960s. The students were unconventional and wholly caught up in the political climate. They were looking to justify their love of creative expression with some sense of social purpose. It seemed like a luxury to be teaching textile design, and yet Katherine made it feel absolutely essential to do so. They began to understand that there was a fundamental need for the arts and that this transcended contemporary politics gone awry.

Katherine did not draw a line between art and life. She brought as much creative zeal to producing a xeroxed announcement to a faculty meeting as to her more substantial work in textiles. In fact, it was this kind of crossing over that led her to explore the potential of designing with the photocopy machine. While the standard University announcement would be neatly and dully typed, hers would incorporate a collage that irreverently juxtaposed images of dogs, folk toys and travel brochure photographs. These captured a spirit that pervades all of her work; the playful seriousness and the serious play that she felt was the essence of creativity.

The photocopy machine became one of her major tools during this time. She would copy images from magazines, or actual textile fragments or bits of embroidery--endlessly transforming them by playing with the color knobs, or moving them across the plate while the machine was in process, or re-copying second, third, and fourth generation copies to create the kind of granular print that she was after. She would sometimes bring these photocopied pictures to

faculty meetings along with her color crayons and sit throughout the meeting coloring the images to be heat transferred onto her current textile project. It was a disarming reminder to the social and agricultural scientists who comprised our department faculty that art and design were created by the human hand.

She engaged her immediate environment into the imagery of her textiles. Berkeley street musicians, her traveling companions posed in front of the Pyramids or on camelback in Egypt, the gardens of Monet, Hawaiian dancers from photographs in a Honolulu newspaper; all provided the impetus for textile designs. Her wit and humor caused the combining of these unexpected elements into unexpected solutions. One particular piece comes to mind, a jacket entitled "A Phantasmagorical Meeting Between Julie and Tyrone with Santa Claus in Front of MacDonald's in Tokyo." To describe it briefly, Katherine combined a traditional Japanese-style Hippari jacket and traditional shibori technique of stitch resist dyeing to create images of her two dogs, Julie and Tyrone, dancing on their hind legs before an image of Santa Claus. In the background float a stitch-resist hamburger and the Golden Arches of MacDonald's fast food chain also done in shibori. It is two worlds meeting: the traditional and the contemporary. The formal Japanese East meeting Katherine's personal environment of the West.

Above all, Katherine felt education was concerned with "doing." At the University, where "recording" is often felt to be superior to "doing," Katherine fought for her point of view. The emphasis on projects for students rather than exams was controversial. And yet, she felt deeply that her students should be participants, not just spectators. She has left a legacy of students who embraced the field of textiles, and have pursued their own visions through creative productions. Their capacity--to form, to work and to create--developed out of her capacity to stimulate their creative attitude and abilities. The emphasis was always on the personal interpretation, the personal expression, the human element in design.

Jo Ann C. Stabb

October 1987
Department of Environmental Design
University of California at Davis

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Katherine Westphal is the second memoirist in the oral history series on Fiber Arts in the San Francisco Bay Area. A productive artist and educator, she is Professor Emeritus of Design, University of California at Davis, a longtime Berkeley resident, and a leader in the development of fiber arts.

She has taught celebrated classes in design at Davis, and played a significant role in the emergence of the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences.

She practices the arts that give her pleasure, making collages, handmade paper, paper kimonos, and other wearable art, painting, embellishing, quilting, and experimenting with copy machines. She said, "To me, the importance is the joy of doing. I love to cut, paste, color, stitch, and collect." This joy has brought substantial recognition, including scores of exhibitions, a variety of works in permanent collections, grants and awards, special projects, and many invitations to lecture. (See the Appendix for a partial listing of her creative activities.)

Professor Westphal examines words as carefully as art works, and questioned the designation "fiber" artist. Smiling, she wondered why an artist should be classified by the medium in which the work is expressed. Sculptors are not called "marble", "wood", or "stone" artists, nor painters "paint" artists. Because so much of her work involves printing on textiles, she accepts the odd term "surface designer" as she does "fiber" artist, and continues to create whatever commands her attention and curiosity.

She is an accomplished painter, potter--learning to make pots in order to embellish their surfaces--a photographer, speaker, and published writer, and has also designed fabrics for commercial production. She draws and makes small, witty books that she has written, illustrated, and bound by hand.

When Professor Westphal agreed to take part in an oral history memoir, she received a suggested outline of possible topics that the interviewer pulled together from a variety of sources. These included Katherine Westphal's published articles, reviews, and printed speeches, University records, conversations with colleagues and students from the Davis campus and Berkeley's Fiberworks, and a previous interview with her husband Ed Rossbach, as well as references to her work in art books, journals, and exhibition catalogs.

Professor Westphal provided five interviews: September 27, October 4, October 18, November 2, and November 8, 1984. The sessions took place in the morning and usually lasted about two hours. The interviews were taped, transcribed, lightly edited, and submitted to her for approval. She reviewed the transcript, responded to queries, and provided some clarifications. Her schedule in retirement is a busy one, and required some adjustment of travel plans and production schedules to reach a completion date.

The interviews took place in the living room of the home she shares with her husband. Two enthusiastic dogs offer amusement and delight. They serve as inspiration for the masks that complete her splendid samurai armor, and become characters in her whimsical books. From a sheltered corner at the south end of the long living room, Katherine Westphal could see and refer to textiles and art works collected during extensive travels, and the many toys that have helped her students learn to observe, think, and write. From time to time she used her own works and those of her husband to illustrate a point or present an example.

A lively narrator, she knows how to tell the "good story" that makes an object, a place, an experience memorable. Her remarks are filled with amusement that is often directed at herself, as well as enthusiasm for the colleagues and other artists she recognizes as courageous and adventurous. She is grateful to those who have shown her new possibilities in art and in literature, and is eager for her students and colleagues to experience the same freedom. From Davis to Vienna she spreads the doctrine of experience, openness, and enjoyment. "I think this [question of what is truth?] applies to all sorts of art, whether it is literature or painting or fiber art or sculpture. You have to make it so interesting that people are going to get infected with watching and looking at this thing or reading it through to the end. It has to be a good story that you're telling, and you enhance those things that you know as reality, and you use your imagination to investigate further."

The vital importance of experience is a recurrent theme in her teaching and in the interviews. She told of entering the Giotto Chapel in Padua to see works familiar through history classes as easel paintings, or "single paintings with an edge around them." She said, "It never occurred to me that these were all jam-packed together and they were really an environment ...an interior of a building...on the walls...on the ceiling...you were surrounded in this absolutely marvelous blue color with all of these browns and pinks and tans of the figures moving across them."

In the spirit of such revelations Katherine Westphal and her husband have traveled widely. She can communicate and share appreciation regardless of language at a temple sale in Kyoto or a market in Shiraz, Iran. In the Shiraz market she conferred with local women over a skirt and the right kind of belt to wear with it. She said, "I feel very much at one with these people...and it wasn't just going and looking at them and seeing what the people are doing. I was all a part of it."

"This is what I like about travel. I love to go to the temple sales in Japan and see what they're buying and they're watching what I'm buying, and they're seeing whether I'm getting a good price. I'm not sure I am getting the right price...but it is that I'm appreciating this and so are they." When she gets home, she is stimulated to use these experiences in what she produces.

She says, "It's fun to be in this place so that I don't feel that as an artist I am existing just in 1980 in Berkeley, California. I feel that I can find roots anywhere in the world. Anything that I can see and appreciate, that can be my work, too." These influences mirror her travels: the art of ancient Egypt, Japan, India, the embroideries of China, the mosques of Iran, and the baroque palaces of France and Austria.

The materials she uses to interpret the images of experience have a motive power of their own. She observed: "What I do results from what materials I'm using and how those materials work..." She may turn to pen and ink on paper towels (a combination that produces interesting blots), diffraction mylar, panne velvet, a box of unrelated items that resemble a hardware-store reject collection, handmade paper, handprinted fabric, and heat-transfer crayons, to mention a few. As for the equipment that she uses to produce and manipulate these exotic materials, Katherine Westphal describes the laundry tray that holds the pulp for making paper, an electric iron that serves as a heat-transfer press. For a printing table, she said briskly, "I just take a piece of plywood and put some polyester and canvas on top of it. I create my tools myself. Then I'm not inhibited."

Materials, experience, images from other cultures, nature and animals, works by American artists all serve to spark her originality. "No art exists just for one person at one time. You build on all art that went before you, you build on all experience." She says little about her own influence, but it is pervasive. One leaves each interview session uplifted with laughter, but slowly. Each object, each tree, each neighboring dog in his new winter coat suddenly seems to invite thought and demand attention.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

March 1988
Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name KATHERINE WESTPHAL ROSSBACH

Date of birth JAN 2 1919 Place of birth LOS ANGELES, CA

Father's full name LEO WESTPHAL

Birthplace WISCONSIN

Occupation GROCERY CHAIN STORE MANAGER

Mother's full name EMMA KAKER WESTPHAL

Birthplace WISCONSIN

Occupation HOUSEWIFE

Where did you grow up ? LOS ANGELES CA

Present community BERKELEY CA

Education 1943 BA, MA UNIVERSITY OF CA BERKELEY

1941 AA LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

Occupation(s) 1966 - 1979 PROF OF DESIGN UNIV. OF CA. DAVIS

1950 - 1958 FREE LANCE TEXTILE DESIGNER (PRINTED)

1946 - 1950 INSTRUCTOR - ART - UNIV. OF WASH. SEATTLE, WA

1945-46 INSTRUCTOR - ART UNIV. OF WYOMING CARAMI WYO

Special interests or activities _____

I EARLY YEARS AND FAMILY

Cutting and Pasting, Coloring and Building

Nathan: I've been looking forward to this for some time. I know you have had some interesting adventures and a lot of activity. How would you like to start? Do you want to tell about your family and how you may have become interested in art?

Westphal: That's a little bit hard because I have a tendency not to recall things from a very long time ago. I know, and this is something that I am going to say--that I don't know whether I recall this or whether this is something that somebody has told me. I can remember, I think, remember sitting on the floor in my mother's kitchen, sort of under where the ironing board folded into the wall, and working on the floor with scissors and paper and crayons. I was a cut-and-paster.

I spent, I think, a great deal of my childhood cutting up things and assembling things and drawing and coloring and making doll clothes; doll clothes that were not cut from patterns or were like anybody else's doll clothes, I just made doll clothes. I made jump-suits for dolls and then all the neighborhood children had to have jump-suits for their dolls. [laughter]

My family bought me an elaborate doll house with all sorts of little furniture, which I completely rejected and used pieces of wood that my uncle had given to me and made these into furniture. I think this really distressed my family very much, that I didn't

Westphal: play with the toys that they provided, but I took pieces of wood and made toys. I know this, this is a memory, this business of making toys out of these bits of wood, because I still know what shape the pieces of wood were. They weren't very good-looking furniture, but they were furniture to me.

I was an only child, so mainly I played by myself. There were two or three other little girls in the neighborhood, but they were involved in other things. Two were very much younger, and one was a little older, so there wasn't a child around approximately my age. This evidently didn't worry me at all because I played by myself and did all this cutting and pasting and making furniture and clothes and whatever. Great messes all over the house and yard. But I was content, I guess.

Roller-Skating to the Library

Westphal: I don't remember this, but evidently I didn't learn to read in the first grade, and so I was not put into the second grade. My mother was very upset about this, so she sent me to summer school, and this was at a different school. Well, I learned to read, and it took then, and I was immediately put into the second grade when they found out I could read. From then on there was no problem. The problem was getting enough books from the library. With my roller skates I would make very frequent trips to the library. This continued until I was probably 14 or 15 years old.

Nathan: This was in Los Angeles?

Westphal: This was in Los Angeles. This is the section of Los Angeles that now is a very busy area. When I grew up in this area there was an oat field across the street with some pepper trees on it and they stabled horses there. Well, right now there's a supermarket on that corner and traffic signals, and it's very congested, but when I grew up in this area--it's sort of between the Wilshire District and Hollywood--it was very suburban. Vacant lots with anise growing on them and big black and orange hairy caterpillars, which I was always bringing home.

I'm sure, in junior high school I spent every afternoon after school roller-skating all over, all the way up to Hollywood and Vine and back, which was maybe three miles. I don't think my mother ever knew where I was in the afternoon, out roller-skating all over

Westphal: the neighborhood or going to the library and bringing great armfuls of books home. I'm not sure that I ever understood what was in the books, but I was reading them, and evidently, somehow, I learned to read easily and rapidly in this process.

My mother was more interested in cooking, I think, than in anything. She could sew, and she made clothes for me, and she made very elaborate Christmas cookies, and was very involved with decorating the Christmas tree and birthday parties and crepe paper costumes for things like May Day or parades. But as far as anybody in my family doing any kind of painting, drawing, this was not anything that was a family tradition.

Comparisons and Aversions

Westphal: I had a cousin who was 15 years older than I was and had, and still does have, a very fine singing voice, but it was not particularly developed. She could play the piano. So my mother decided I should play the piano. Of course this was not anything that I was interested in, but I was forced to take piano lessons and to practice on the piano, and these became very emotional sessions because I did not want to be restricted to the piano. I was not able to do it because, I feel about this now, I always had this 15-year difference with this cousin I was compared to, and I could not possibly succeed at this. To this day I never learned to type, although I was provided with a typewriter, but this cousin could type beautifully. You know, she was supposed to teach me how and she thought I was just impossible because I couldn't learn how to type, and so to this day I do not type. I prefer to hand-letter everything rather than send a typed letter, which I think, is a little disconcerting to people.

Studying Drawing and Art

Westphal: I was always terribly interested in drawing and art. When I was in high school I went to a night school two or three nights a week to take life drawing. My father was willing to drive me over, and I would spend a couple of evenings a week drawing. This was in the Depression, and there were lots of schools around where people went. About a mile from my home was a junior college that had classes and they would let me take the classes since I was serious, not fooling around.

Westphal: So by the time I graduated from high school and went to Los Angeles City College I was pretty skilled in drawing. And I, at that time, I thought--you know, everybody is counseled to have goals--I thought my goal was to be a commercial artist. So I went to Los Angeles City College and took their basic course that goes to an A.A., and then I would go to art school.

Well, one summer I went to a professional art school and I hated it. So I knew that this was not for me; there were too many rules and regulations at a commercial art school. I was much more interested in painting for itself and art history and all this investigation of things, and the people who were teaching there said, "Why don't you consider going to the university and getting a teaching credential? This is a nice thing to do." So I filled in the gaps and did the equivalent of the first two years at the university beyond this A.A. thing.

As far as I am concerned, for me personally, an art school is not the kind of education I think is best. It's too limited, it's too narrow. It is emphasizing technique rather than real understanding. This doesn't mean that you can't get understanding there, but it's a narrower understanding. You are focused in, I think, too early on something that you think may be your means of expressing an idea to the world, and it may not be because you haven't tried others. You know, I can say that I don't like artichokes if I've never tasted an artichoke. But after I've tasted an artichoke maybe I like an artichoke.

I think that the same thing happens with people going to art schools and deciding ahead of time that they're going to be a sculptor, when they may have never, ever touched the magic of a textile. They may be going to be a sculptor, but really, if they would have the choice in this cafeteria world so that they could try this and that, they could make a more sensible choice without a prejudice of saying "because an artichoke has a funny, bumpy, hard surface, I'm not going to like the taste of an artichoke."

I think you have to try all these things, and I think an art school tends to specialize too soon. Because art schools are very, very expensive, people don't have the luxury of moving through it for a long period of time. They have to get the degree, and the emphasis is much more on merchandising, it's much more on getting a job.

I am a strong believer in a liberal education, that the education you get is not to produce a job for you and bring money into you life. That's nice if it does, but I'm concerned with the

Westphal: whole person, and I'm concerned with what you're going to do that interests you for the rest of your life, that you're not going to be a person who just has the degree, gets a good job, has the money, and comes home and drops himself in front of television with the football games.

Not that I have any reason for thinking that you shouldn't watch quiz shows or football games--I think we all of us do--but there has to be something more. There has to be some real feeling that you are interested in some one thing or many things and you're going to pursue it and learn more about it, not to turn it into something monetary but just so you yourself broaden in other ways than just getting fat, that your horizons are greater, that you, every day, maybe open a new window to what there is to the rest of the world.

And it's pure idealism. Fortunately, I have been able, I think, pretty much to live that kind of life, not by any effort of my own, it just happened. This makes me happy, it might not make other people happy. I, right now, think that too much of the world is concerned with money and self, real selfish interests, not thinking of the other people in the world, and there's a price on everything. I feel that I don't want a price on everything, although to look at my surroundings, you know I'm involved with material culture, but I have it because I love it, not because something is worth \$10 or \$1500. I can be as entranced with and carry around and bring into my environment a dead leaf that has fallen off a tree as well as a Persian rug. I mean they are of equal excitement. And this is, I think, what doesn't happen in art school education, at least in my experience with it.

Very briefly while I was in college in Los Angeles I went to a commercial art school, Art Center School, and I immediately rejected this, this was not what I was interested in, and returned to the university. Later I went to San Francisco Art Institute very briefly because I wanted to learn how to throw ceramic pots. I didn't learn there.

It was just a night school class once a week and you can't do it that way, you have to do it every day in your life, but at least I found out then that that wasn't the way you did it. And that was important. Maybe my desire at that time wasn't large enough. I didn't have enough commitment for that sort of thing, but at least I had tasted it.

Westphal: I'm going to go on about these art schools that I went to. I went to Arts and Crafts [California College of Arts and Crafts] for several years because I wanted to further pursue this ceramic thing, and it was down there that I learned to throw feebly on a wheel. I learned I like to hand build and I learned I like to build clay bodies that would do a certain thing. I learned from Edith Heath how to calculate a glaze or a clay body.

These are things that now I have sloughed off, these are not things that I use anymore, but at the time I was very interested in this and worked in ceramics and then I found really I am more interested in textiles, so I moved back. But you have to try many things.

II UC BERKELEY STUDIES

Westphal: I came to Berkeley, as a junior.

Nathan: How did you choose Berkeley?

Westphal: I chose Berkeley because the teacher that I took art history from had gone to Berkeley and he seemed to think that this was a very good place to go. Also I wanted to get away from home. I felt it was very important not to go to UCLA, which my parents wanted me to go to because I could live at home. I wanted to get away from home.

So I came to Berkeley, and this was a very good experience. I really loved Berkeley, and I loved the painting program that I was involved in, but then the war came, and the student population dropped tremendously.

Lea Miller and Duke Wellington

Westphal: At Berkeley I not only took painting classes, I went over to what was the Decorative Art department--this was in an adjoining building on the Berkeley campus--and I took a weaving class from Lea Miller. Now, this may be in graduate or undergraduate years; I don't know when this occurred, it may have been when I was a graduate student. And I took an absolutely wonderful lecture course that was called-- I can't think of it. It was taught by Winfield Scott [Duke] Wellington, and it was something on the structure of art, decorative art, architecture. It was "Expression in Materials."

Westphal: Well, this made a profound impression on me because Duke not only showed slides, but he brought us into a room that he had sort of converted into a museum with all these objects, and you could see them, you could touch them. You weren't talking about dead objects, slides, you were talking about the real thing. This was a revolutionary idea to me that you could see all these things. The decorative. The ceramics. We talked about architecture, ceramics, baskets.

Nathan: And this was in the building, not at his home?

Worth Ryder

Westphal: No, in the building, the Dec Art Annex. At that time he had an office in that building which was crammed with his collection of things. Duke was a great collector, and he was as much a personality and for making everything a good story as Worth Ryder was. One person was involved with decorative arts of the past and the other with painting of the present time.

What I got from Worth Ryder as a student was a profound respect for working as an artist and translating the world around you to your own vision. This was very comfortable for me, and yet I was terribly attracted to all this decorative art stuff.

Since I had spent so much time in Los Angeles in college taking art, I was pretty skilled by the time I got to Berkeley, and I took classes there, but I had all these units amassed; I just had to get the right things to fill in the requirements to graduate. So I had a few extra units to fool around with and I would go over to this other [Decorative Art] department and take classes. For some reason or other I don't think you could transfer units back and forth. I don't know; you know, it's the same bureaucracy that goes on everywhere today. They make all these horrible restrictions so that students have to fulfill somebody else's idea of what a program is instead of what they are interested in. Maybe we'd have more successful people if you would let people make their own choices instead of doing a check-list education.

So these people were important. I learned to weave from Lea Miller, and became a good friend of hers. One time, when she was away on sabbatical or something, she let me borrow her beautiful Gilmore loom, and I had it in my apartment and would weave on this loom. You know, she sensitized me to the structure of cloth. This

Westphal: didn't take very well, I find that I, at this time, do not like to work with the loom. I don't like to weave, I don't like all these little threads getting tangled together. I find there are other ways of achieving something without weaving a piece of cloth; I buy it.

Mary Dumas

Westphal: At this time when I was in school, the teaching assistant in the art department was Mary Dumas. She was teaching the art history classes for Walter Horn, who was in the Army Corps of Engineers. The teaching staff at Berkeley at this time, in the war years, was small; people were being lopped off. Chiura Obata was sent to a relocation center. John Haley was in the navy out in Guam. Walter Horn was off somewhere in Europe finding treasures. Some classes were taught. Mary taught Walter Horn's class for a short while.

I got to know Mary, and Mary turned out to be one of my really very, very good friends. I've learned an awful lot about art from Mary, as well as learning how to print textiles from her.

In 1950, after Ed Rossbach and I were married, we came down here. I went up and learned how to use a silkscreen and all these various things from Mary Dumas. And we would go see Mary Dumas maybe once, twice a week, and we'd just sit and talk, and this was a very, very important friendship for me. We had a very similar background, both having gone through the painting department at Berkeley.

Master's Degree in Painting

Westphal: Well, eventually the war ended, and I had some very short term jobs. Through Monica Haley I got a job at a child-care center in Richmond during the war. It was a custodial care center for the shipyard workers' children. Then, after that, I worked as an occupational therapist at the Kaiser Hospital in Richmond.

These things were all after I had gotten back from Mexico. I had a Phelan Traveling Scholarship from the art department. I went to Mexico for three months and I studied the mural painters

Westphal: down there in Mexico, and just experienced traveling. Then I came back, and I still didn't have a job. I knew by this time that I was not going into teaching because a shared experience of practice teaching made me realize this wasn't for me. So I dropped out of the whole education program and got a master's degree, before I went to Mexico, in just painting.

So I did this little stint, once with the little children and once with the bedridden people.

III TEACHING, LEARNING, DESIGNING

Westphal: I had my name in at the placement office and I got picked from the list at the placement office.

University of Wyoming

Westphal: The University of Wyoming needed somebody so I went to Laramie, Wyoming, and this was a real experience. It snowed and it snowed and it snowed, and it melted every day. It would snow every night and be dry the next day between the drifts. This was not only a complete change weatherwise, but it was a complete change from living in a very urban center, as I had always done. I lived in Los Angeles and I lived in Berkeley. At that time even Berkeley felt like an urban center. If I would compare it today I would realize there would be a big difference.

Community of Artists

Westphal: But in Laramie, Wyoming, I could walk from one end of town to the other end of town in probably 15 minutes. It had two main streets which crossed each other, various things like that. But the important thing for me there was the people I worked with in the art department and other departments on the campus. Because it was a small town you made friends quickly and your interests were stimulated. You had to make your own community.

One of the people who also was teaching in the art department was John Oppen, a painter. He was very influenced by Marsden Hartley and this came through in the work he was doing at that time. I guess it stimulated me to do paintings, watercolors, of the

Westphal: Laramie area. I also got acquainted with the man who was in charge of the drama productions on the campus, because even at that time I liked to move out in all directions. I designed a stage set for one of their productions and helped construct and paint all the flats, and it was interesting.

It was a very interesting time. I taught in Extension in Cheyenne one night a week, and this was chiefly to get out of Laramie. I can still remember these horrendous trips from Laramie to Cheyenne with ground blizzards. It wasn't snowing, it was the wind blowing all the snow across the highway. One of us on each side of the car would be hanging out watching for the little markers to stay on the road. This was a time when I did not drive; I was only a passenger, thank God.

Nathan: When you were doing your watercolors, were these landscapes, or figures?

Westphal: They were both. They were landscapes or I would do paintings of my friends around, not so much sitting down and painting them but making some drawings and then building it up with an imaginative background. These things are all long since gone, but I was constantly working. There was a jewelry shop in this complex where the art department was, so I made a little jewelry.

Nathan: Would it be interesting to compare the students that you taught in Wyoming, at Berkeley, and at Davis? Was there a difference?

Westphal: I didn't teach at Berkeley.

Nathan: You were a student yourself, a research assistant?

Westphal: A reader.

Wyoming was a disaster as far as I was concerned because when I accepted the job I thought I was supervising practice teachers in art and also teaching. I can't even remember what I taught on the college level. Well, I got to Wyoming and found out that they had never had a practice teacher in art, and the poor supervisor of the practice teachers had to teach all the grades from one to 12 in the demonstration school. This of course is one of the difficulties of being very young and very naive in hunting for a job. You get there and then something is different when you get there.

Westphal: I simply couldn't take this one to 12. So one of the people at Wyoming said, "Well, I will take the high school students if you take all the rest, and you can teach the jewelry class that I'm supposed to teach." So we sort of did a little trading off among ourselves. So I can't compare because I had very few college students. I did not want to teach the little monsters in grades one to 12. I wasn't equipped to do it; I couldn't keep law and order. I could keep the little hands busy for a while, but it just wasn't possible. So I was very glad to get out of that when I went to Washington.

University of Washington

Westphal: In Washington when I got there they handed me a list of what I was to teach every week of the quarter and what it was going to be. They had the whole course outlined and scheduled. I did this once and I went to the chairman of the department and I said, "I can't teach this way. This course has been created for me." The chairman at that time was Walter Isaacs. He was a painter, and he respected this and he said, "We've got all these students"--the veterans were all coming back--"we need people, we'll just switch somebody else into that, who is happy teaching in a structured thing," and let me loose and this was fine.

I loved teaching, just so that it was creative, and that I could make the decisions of when and what I taught just as long as I covered the basic group of stuff. So I'm sure that the experience at Wyoming was good because then I learned if you don't like it, you tell somebody you don't like it.

I think this was really a good lesson, this Wyoming time, because I found out I could stand up for myself. I think that this, to a certain extent, may be a flaw in having me work in a university because certainly at Davis, if I couldn't get a thing to work the way I wanted it, it didn't bother me to go and complain. If I didn't get anywhere at the next level, I would go to the next level; I didn't wait. I'm not sure that this makes it very easy to have this sort of a maneuver going on for an administrator, this free spirit who will stand up to these things.

I had taken a summer session course at Berkeley from Ruth Pennington, a jeweler who taught at the University of Washington. Some time during that year they needed someone at Washington to

Westphal: teach their freshman courses, and she wrote and asked if I would be interested. I was sort of thinking of all these things that people had said, like, "You must always stay in your first teaching job for two years, otherwise people will think you weren't successful," and I suddenly thought, "Well, I don't really care if people think I was successful; I don't want to live in Laramie, Wyoming for the rest of my life. I want to get back so I'm in proximity to the water." I didn't like this dryness. I felt I needed the fog and the moisture.

Friends, Colleagues, Teachers

Westphal: So I packed all my toys in my trunk and moved to Seattle, Washington, and it was damp all the time. I mean it was constant rain. Everything was terribly green and terribly damp and rainy. But again it was a very wonderful environment because there was a close-knitness with your colleagues there. And pretty soon there would be a group of us who would be all working on our own, doing our little paintings, and then we would get together for dinner and talk. These people became a very influential part of my life.

One of these was Wendell Brazeau, who was a nonfigurative painter, very abstract. [gesturing] This little optical painting is one of his that's on the wall. And of course Ed was part of this group--this was before we got married--and he was painting at that time. There were students. I think of Spencer Moseley who eventually became head of the art department at the University of Washington. He is no longer head, he has gone back to just teaching. And Hazel Koenig, another student.

It became a real nucleus of friends who were involved in these things. I think to a certain extent we all influenced each other very much, and it was a very good climate for talking about what you were doing and showing what you were doing. There always seemed to be some little gallery or the Henry Gallery or something that was interested in showing the new work that you were doing.

"Intensive and Unconventional Color"

Nathan: I very much enjoyed reading this book on Wendell Brazeau that you kindly loaned to me.¹ Spencer Moseley and Millard B. Rogers wrote about your influence on Brazeau. They mentioned your "intensive, unconventional color, subject matter that ranged apparently from taverns and girls to nonobjective." They felt that you showed "vitality, invention, and spirited subject matter." What do they mean by "intensive and unconventional color?" What was unconventional about it?

Westphal: You know, the Northwest has a pervasive gray quality. The landscape is very green. It's all cool kind of color and grayness because of the atmosphere. The art of the area when I first went up there, which was, I guess, 1946, all reflected this grayness. Painters painted by making their colors go together by putting a little black and a little white. So everything was gray.

If you think of the painters of prominence in the Seattle area in 1946, it was Mark Tobey, Kenneth Callahan, Morris Graves-- Well, that'll do. And the pervasive quality of all these things was a tiny brushstroke and a grayness and not much contrast colorwise.

Well, I came up, and at that time I considered myself a painter. These people considered me a painter; I was painting and drawing at that time. I had been in this area; people who had influenced me when I was at Cal were, again Worth Ryder, Margaret Peterson, John Haley to a certain extent. Then, when I was in Wyoming, a friend of mine, John Oppen, was very much influenced by Marsden Hartley.

All the painting reflected a higher keyed color. It tended toward warm colors: yellows, reds, pinks, oranges, purples, plus other things. But nothing had black and white mixed with it. It was more pure color. I'm not saying primary colors, I'm not saying red, yellow, and blue; I'm saying pure color, more the way it came out of the tube. If there was white in it it was used to make pastel colors in contrast to the full intensity color. There would be dark colors, but the whole mood was of lightness and brilliance and color.

¹Wendell Brazeau: A Search for Form, Spencer Moseley and Millard B. Rogers (Seattle: Published for the Henry Art Gallery by the University of Washington Press, 1977).

Westphal: I think that's what they meant. It was unconventional for the Northwest to have somebody come in and use this kind of color and use it in big washes of color, big brushes instead of little teeny brushes. I think that's what they meant. And that's probably what would be characteristic of the kind of color I used at that time. I probably still use that kind of color.

Small Canvases, Paper, Water-Base Paints

Nathan: Did you tend to work on a larger scale?

Westphal: No. The scale was not the difference. At that point in time nobody worked large. In that area a 40 x 60 inch canvas was enormous. People tended to work on small canvases or small watercolors. There was very much painting on paper. Now we call it "works on paper." People used water-base paints; this is all before the time of acrylics. So you used gouache or you used watercolor on paper, and you put things in the watercolor, or even when you used oil paint, to get a matte finish. You put--I'm trying to think what it was we put in. Some sort of a white powder. That's very scientific.

Nathan: We can drop that in.

Westphal: No, that's all right. I will think of it. I think it's a plaster-of-Paris substance. I'd have to look it up what this was. Chalk. [remembering] We put ground, powdered chalk into the paint to give it a more matte thing. Of course it destroyed the tenacity of the holding-up surface; it would chip off.

Influence of the Medium

Westphal: So when acrylics came in much later, this revolutionized what was being done because you were able to paint on a canvas with paint that dried rapidly. Oil paint took so long to dry in that way.

Nathan: In that atmosphere?

Westphal: Well, in any atmosphere, oil takes a very long time to dry.

Westphal: Actually, I think as much in painting as in textile design or fiber art--whatever you want to call this--the medium really influences what comes out of it. I am sure, for example, that Rembrandt would paint different paintings if he had acrylics than when he was using oil. These very slow-drying paintings that were created over a long period of time could only be done that way because oil gets smudged, you know, and you cannot get a brushstroke to stay very easily if you continue working on this thing. So you have to have periods of time for it to dry, to set up, before you can work on it some more. With acrylic, in 15 minutes the thing has set up, so that you can put another brushstroke on top and not have all the color from underneath come through.

Nathan: Does this influence spontaneity?

Westphal: Oh yes, very, very much. I think this is one of the reasons paintings now are more spontaneous.

UC Berkeley and the Nepotism Rule

Westphal: Then, in 1950, Ed was offered a job at the University in Berkeley, and we got married and came down here. I found that I could not even teach in Extension because of nepotism. This was a no-no.

For five years I had been very actively teaching and really loving it. It was teaching two-dimensional design and painting and drawing, this sort of thing, and really loved the interaction with students. But, you know, I was scarcely older than my students. I was maybe at the most eight to ten years older than the students, and this was very interesting. Well, then suddenly I came down here and I could no longer teach.

Nathan: Could you say a word about how the nepotism rule worked? Is it that a husband and a wife could not teach in the University or just in the same department?

Westphal: At that time I think it was in the same department, but whether it was the University as a whole I simply don't know. The course that had been proposed for me to teach in Extension was affiliated with the same department that my husband taught in. And this was really a no-no. Here we were in the same field, you know. I suppose it could have been with special dispensation from the Pope or something. I don't know. But it just didn't seem worth it.

Ceramics

Westphal: I went to, I guess, night school and took some ceramics and found out I was very interested in this, so I went down to Arts and Crafts and I learned to throw pots on a wheel so I could paint the outsides of them. I did this down there one day a week. I would go down on Fridays where they had a whole group of people in the same situation who were just doing it because they liked to do it and here were good facilities that they could use. So I learned a very great deal in this time about constructing pots, about glazes, about clay bodies, and enough that I could work on my own.

Commercial Designs

Westphal: When Ed and I were down here [at Berkeley], we decided we really wanted to go and spend some time in Europe. So when his first sabbatical came we thought we would like to spend the whole year in Europe, but obviously you couldn't on an assistant professor's salary. So I thought, "Well, what could I do?" Mary Dumas was teaching printed textiles at the University so Mary said, "Well, come on now. I will teach you how to do these methods."

So I did this and I prepared, oh, I suppose 20 textile swatches. I looked through the yellow pages of the New York phone book under textile converters, and got all these names and addresses of them, and I wrote to them and said I had a group of textile designs, would they be interested in seeing them. Well, of this group I got about three answers. One of them was really kind of a long letter and it was an interesting thing.

I didn't know the difference at that time--it wasn't listed in the book--which were agents and which were converters. These were just names in the telephone book, and I was pretty naive about this whole thing. So I wrote back and said I would send them some designs. So I rolled up my textile designs, on pieces of cloth, and sent them back. Well, I immediately had a phone call, and he said, "Are those your designs? You didn't cut them off other pieces of cloth?" And I said, "No. They're my designs." Well, he was interested.

Nathan: Was this silkscreen?

Westphal: They were all sorts of things. They were silkscreen, they were potato prints, they were stencils, just the whole gamut. Silk-screening is not a particularly easy method for designing because it requires so much in preparing the screen that you can't do enough variations. It is making a plan and then you get what you planned, and that wasn't the way I worked. I just worked from materials and I had to be very flexible and move in many directions, build up and pare down.

Well, he sold a few of these things and got very interested and asked for more and more things. Well, some time in this whole process he said to me, "You know, designs are usually prepared on boards." Nobody in industry was buying textiles on textiles; they were always buying printed textiles that are designed on pieces of cardboard. I was designing them on the cloth, because I wanted to see how they looked when they moved. He said, "I have to convince my clients that this is possible."

Well, he convinced them. And Ed got interested in doing this, so he did some. For about eight years we both had this agent and we worked on free-lance. I did most of the designs that were sent because Ed had another job, but he would do them occasionally. We'd bundle everything up, and the agent would come out when he had a demand. American Fabrics said that the trend in the future for women's wear was going to be textiles that looked like India and they had borders on them.

So Frederick Karoly, my agent, went through his little collection of designs that he had in New York, and he flew out over a Labor Day weekend bearing this little bundle of things, and he said, "I go back in two days; I want borders and gold on all of these things." So we worked the whole weekend putting borders and gold on these things [laughing] so he could take them to the market on Tuesday when he got back.

But it was this sort of pressure that finally made me decide I really didn't want to do this anymore. It was very seasonal. Sometimes you would be working very constantly for weeks at a time and then there would be nothing for months because you were responding to what industry wanted and also their aesthetic demands.

We spent nine months in Europe, and I was seeing art firsthand. We had an apartment in Rome and were there for, I suppose, six months. I was painting watercolors on the marble dining table in Rome. We were thoroughly enjoying the city, and we decided it was time to come back.

Westphal: Well, when I came back it didn't seem so exciting to be working for industry. I got tired of doing everything in repeat. So I said I just thought I didn't want to do this anymore, and he wrote back and said, "Well, I've always wanted to go around the world. I think I will close my business and go around the world." So he bundled all these textile designs into boxes and sent them all back to me.

Hand-Printed Textiles in Patchwork Quilts

Westphal: Well, for several years I lived with boxes of textiles. I was too Scotch to throw out all these great works of art that were sitting in the corner. Then suddenly I thought, "I could make those into patchwork quilts." This is approximately, I suppose, 1961, '62, something like that. I began cutting these things up and making them into patchwork quilts.

Somewhere in this period of time (Jack Larsen is a good friend of my husband), Jack was out here visiting. He saw one of these things I was working on. He was arranging a Triennale of Design in Milan and he asked me to send one of these quilts. The first one went to the Interiors magazine design office in New York, where they were going to photograph these things and then they were going to be sent on to Milan. Somebody broke into their offices and stole all the cameras and my quilt. They evidently used my quilt to wrap the cameras. Fortunately, Jack called about this, you know, and I said, "Well, I have another one underway. I will finish that and send that." And I think that second one was much better for the Triennale than the first one would have been. But I really got hooked on doing patchwork quilts out of hand-printed textiles.

Nathan: When you say "textiles," what sorts of fabrics were you printing on? Was it cotton or--

Westphal: Mainly, at that time, for the industry designing, I was printing on batiste because this took the dye beautifully. In some cases it was necessary for me to see through to something underneath. Very definitely, when I was trying to put it in repeat I had to be able to do a tracing of motives and move it around on the outside edges to get it to repeat. So batiste was a very good material. They were all printed with vat dye on batiste. So I used these swatches and made quilts; quilt after quilt after quilt.

Nathan: What happened at the Triennale? Did anything come of the quilt that was sent to the Triennale?

Westphal: That was exhibited there. Like all these things, you send something off, it's exhibited and it comes back and that's it. You know, nothing happens beyond this.

Somewhere in this--this is, I suppose, before 1965, somewhere in there--I had amassed quite a few pots and quite a few quilts. At that time Museum West had a gallery in San Francisco, over in Ghirardelli Square, and Ed and I had a show there of his textiles and my quilts and my pots. Then part of this show went to New York, I think the textile part to the American Craft Museum in New York.

Quilts Like Paintings

Nathan: Between about 1958 to 1966--in '66 I gather you went to Davis--would you want to say something about what you did in those eight years?

Westphal: Well, that was when I first started doing those patchwork quilts. This is when I got known as the "quilt lady."

As far as I know, people weren't doing patchwork quilts in an imaginative way. They were copying old designs. I had this box of textiles that I had designed. I had been doing some painting, not too much but some, and then I suddenly thought, "Why, I can sew these all together and do things that are like paintings on them."

Nathan: You were deliberately trying to do something like paintings?

Westphal: Well, they looked like paintings. Now, they really all were intended to be used as bedspreads, but not one in all this time has ever hit a bed. I did these quilts and I think I sent one to some large show in Los Angeles and that is one of the two in the Smithsonian. It is the Statue of Liberty with stars and little boats and all this sort of thing, but it's all patchwork, not realistic, really putting them together in a very abstract way and different ways of putting it. They're all done with designed, hand-printed textiles. These are my own textiles I'm cutting up and reorganizing. Here we are to the collage again, of cutting and pasting together and putting together.

Nathan: Was it hard to cut your work?

Westphal: No, no, no. The only textile I've never wanted to cut is that Jacquard piece that I did, that one I can't cut, but everything else I can cut up and reorganize and destroy. For some reason, I can't cut that one, I haven't been able to yet, I may some day. It may turn into a jacket yet.

So I began doing quilts. Well, I got absolutely fascinated, and this, I think, is pretty characteristic of me: I go overboard, I get completely involved in something and nothing can interfere with this. I'm just compulsive in doing it over and over and over again. So I did a great many quilts at this time, and they got in shows. Then I had a show at Museum West and at the American Craft Museum in New York, and these were all these quilts.

Some of these quilts from this exhibit were sold, which was unusual because mainly, you know, things did not sell, but a collector in Seattle discovered them and bought several. It was that exhibit that the people of Davis saw; they asked me to come and teach there. They saw that I was designing for industry, which was a main concern, and secondly that I was doing something else with it; you know, had an exhibit.

The quilts have evolved very much from that, and from these early things that had been patchwork. Then they went into the quilts that are in the Tutankhamen things which were completely printed on one piece of material. I think when I finished the last of those quilts from that series I thought I would never do another quilt. Right now I'm doing another quilt, and there I have moved back to the scraps that are still left from those early 1960 things. [laughing] I found them in the closet, and my new theory is you can't buy anything new until you've used what you've got here.

So I'm using those, and they're going together, I think, in a very different way. I think this is going to look very different from the other ones. I said to Ed, "When I'm through with this quilt I'm throwing all those patches in the garbage can. That's all going out." This is the last quilt, the final quilt, I feel like making the last tour of the world or something in this. I think I have to move on somewhere else.

But I accepted an invitation to show a quilt next April, I think it is, in the East somewhere. Somehow the letter that asked me was kind of a nice letter and I said yes, and I thought I could use a quilt that I had that hadn't been shown. Well, then I sort of

Westphal: discovered that they were hunting for new quilts and it had a definite theme and that was very restrictive, although it's a theme I have in a quilt right now, but I thought, "If I can't do a new one I can send the old one and they'd never know." Well, that's cheating. But now I'm off on a new one and I think it's going to be very different. I don't know, it may turn out looking like all the rest, but I haven't gone far enough to know. I'm just laying it out on the table right now.

Nathan: This raises an interesting question. You like to not have too firm a plan, sort of see what you have and intuitively move from that. How intuitive can you be in a quilt that has to end up fitting together?

Westphal: You are intuitive in that the top of my table is just about the same size as the quilt, so I just lay the pieces on the top of the table and keep moving them around until the organization is something that I want, and then I begin either taking small sections and sewing them together as a patchwork--

Nathan: You do this on the machine?

Westphal: On the machine. Everything that cannot be seen is machine stitched. Everything that can be seen is hand stitched. I was trying to shortcut the amount of time because the patchworking is much faster than appliqué. Appliqué is very slow.

Two days ago I had this thing set up as I thought I wanted it, and I looked at it the next morning, I thought about it before I got up, and I thought, "That's too static. I can't do it that way." So I went back down and I began rearranging things and now it's going to be very much appliqué and not so much patch. So it's going to take much longer, but I'm much happier. And it isn't firmly resolved yet. Nothing is pinned together, it's just pieces of cloth, a basket of pieces of cloth, and a table with things on it and they keep moving and changing around until I finally get something that I sort of like and then I will pin them down to a back piece of cloth, which is on the table, which is the size of the table, and then I can start finally putting these things together.

Nathan: Is this somewhat similar to the way you did the kimonos with the small pieces of handmade paper?

Westphal: Similar, and it's also similar to the samurai. It's lots of little pieces put together into a whole. I don't know, I'm not sure that this is going to work yet, but at least I started something, so when I have to produce a photograph by the fifteenth of March I have something to photograph.

Westphal: But I think I have gone over. I had a real resistance all this time, for six months, about what was going to be on it. I had vacillated. The whole subject of this is interiors, and it can be as free and as loose as you want. It isn't restrictive, but it can't be outside, it has to be inside. So I really was going to do something based on one of these baroque palaces. It was going to be with color Xerox. When I got my photographs enlarged they seemed too dark. I tried having color Xerox made from them and it was too dark and too somber to express what I wanted to, so that all had to be rejected. And then I was going to just build it up with transfer crayons, and I suddenly didn't want to do that. So then I decided, "Well, I'll get out that box of pieces of material and see if I can't work a different way." Then I had a bridge and a plan for what I was going to do. So then I went back to patchwork, to some of the very same pieces that I used in 1964.

Nathan: Well, maybe the textile itself gives you a certain springboard.

Westphal: I think that's probably right.

I have the textile for the one I was going to do with the shiny thing all around the surface, but it doesn't have any spots on it. It's a nice, white, clean piece of nylon panné velvet, and I can't get started on it. If I could have known it was going to have a heat-transfer and a certain tonality, I could have built for that, but I couldn't visualize in any way that was going to mar that beautiful white piece of nylon panné velvet. So it sits on its bag.

IV TEACHING DESIGN AT UC DAVIS

Westphal: This is now about 1966 when I received a phone call from Davis, and they needed somebody to teach printed textile design up there. At first I said no, and then they called again and I said, "Well, I would consider it for one class for one quarter." And I went up. I didn't want to teach any more. I hadn't taught for 16 years or something like that. I was commuting to Davis on the Greyhound bus, if you can believe this, to teach a class that didn't get over until 5:30 in the afternoon. Well, this really wrecked our dinner schedule because we would have to find places to eat dinner between eight and nine in the evening, and Berkeley at that time had very few.

I taught up there one quarter and I absolutely adored it. Actually, at that time Davis was trying to phase out this area called design. It was in, I think, home economics, and they were phasing out the home economics major as such and changing their whole program around. The people who had been teaching design in home economics, most of them had moved over to the art department. This would be Dan Shapiro and Bob Arneson and an architect, Richard Cramer. Four or five people moved over. What they were trying to do was finish out these few students that they had left around.

Printed Textiles and a New Department

Westphal: At that time Helen Geambruni was teaching history of design, Helge Olsen was teaching the interior section, and I was teaching the printed textiles. They had a fashion designer from Italy who came once a year to teach the costume section. So I continued teaching one class for that whole year.

Nathan: What was it called, the class that you taught?

Westphal: Printed Textiles. I even know the number. It was Design 160.

Well, they had sort of a student interest in the program. When I came they had very few people, while by the time I was there at the end of the first year, they had grown to 24 very active majors who were going to petition the dean to continue this design program. Well, then they did a reorganization, with all this interest, and they founded a department that was called Applied Behavioral Sciences [ABS]. In this Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences were the disciplines: human development, community development, agricultural education, and design, I guess; I can't think of anything more at that time. They set up a conference at Lake Tahoe, and a whole group of us got together and decided what the whole thrust of this department should be.

Well, I really felt very intimidated and out of my depth at this thing because all the people, other than those in design, were all people sitting around with Ph.D.'s and sounding very learned and all this sort of stuff. But we managed and we sort of set up a structure of what this Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences was going to be.

It was a wonderful experience to be part of something that you were planning according to what you believed education should be. It was a very forward-looking group of people. They were willing to try things and think of the welfare of the students, and it sort of became almost a family.

And Design grew and grew and grew until, when I left in 1979, when I retired, there were 300 majors. The dean's office was saying, "We've got to set up standards; this is getting out of hand." They didn't have enough money or space. We were constantly fighting the battle of not enough people to teach this demand, the classes were so large. Yet, at the same time, the dean's office was very happy to be getting the money support for all those students in all these classes. I mean they were torn, but they really didn't want-- They had never, in their master plan, never had this intention of Design to grow to this extent. They've trimmed it down by now and it's smaller, but it still is very viable.

Non-Structured Curriculum

Westphal: It was very wonderful working with a group of people who all believed at that time that the students should determine their own course. I must say the administration, when we were building this ABS department, was very supportive of what we were trying to do. Eventually other things came into this department--Native American Studies and Asian American Studies--and the program changed.

But we were able to get through a curriculum at that time that was not structured. It was only numbers of units, and the students could decide in general categories how much humanities, social sciences, natural sciences would be in their program. I mean the numbers were fixed, but what the individual course would be was up to the student, and you put this program together to suit your needs. It required a great deal of advising, which was fine. I believe in that very much, in that kind of education. It has gone a different way now and is far more restrictive for the student, and I think probably for the faculty. But things have to change.

So that's where we are, up to 1979, sort of a brief, chronological thing. Now we can whip off in all sorts of other directions, since I feel I've fulfilled that requirement.

Nathan: Beautifully. You've managed to do extremely well with some of the things suggested on your outline simply as framework.

When you do your writing, your publications, how do you manage that?

Westphal: Well, I only did this while I was teaching at the University at Davis, and fortunately the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences that I was part of at that time had a very large secretarial staff and I had a small research grant and that would cover some of these costs. So I would hand-letter the whole thing, all writing--I'd get pretty fast at this lettering with all these years of practice, of doing this--and then I would have one of the secretaries do it in the evening or something like this and pay her, not from the research grant. This took care of photostatic copies or anything else.

And, the way the University worked, if this was a lecture or for a journal or something like this, they would pay the typing; it was just for this little dragons' book² that they could not pay the

²Katherine Westphal, Dragons and Other Creatures: Chinese Embroideries of the Ch'ing Dynasty (Berkeley: Lancaster-Miller, 1979). Hereafter Dragons and Other Creatures.

Westphal: typing because of rules and regulations. So this has never been too much of a problem. Then I also have a husband who types well and easily, and occasionally he would come to the rescue. But mainly everything has always been hand-lettered.

Nathan: People must love your letters.

Westphal: No, I don't write much. I write very little.

Nathan: Are there any other mechanical devices that you don't want to have anything to do with?

Westphal: I think one of them is a computer. I have a real built-in block against a computer. I absolutely love my little calculator; at last I can balance my checkbook.

And I, of course, am mad about a copying machine, but just as a visual thing, as I use it, not the way it is normally used for duplicating letters.

Copying Machines, Found Objects, and the Visual World

Nathan: Are you thinking of the color Xerox?

Westphal: No, I'm thinking mainly of the black and white. When copying machines first came out, my office was in the building that had Home Economics--maybe it wasn't even called that; I guess it was called Textile Science and Nutrition at that point, they reshuffled everything--and because those people needed to copy a lot of statistics and charts and things like that, they installed a five-cents-a-shot copying machine in the lobby of the building.

I had passed this for some time on my way to and from teaching my class, so one day I went down with a pile of nickels and a bunch of seashells and Chore Girls and things like this that I had in my office, and I laid them all on the plate of the machine and I began maneuvering these things around on this machine and taking photographs of it.

Well, this was one of the early machines, and it was a very grey solution, but it was wonderful, what this machine was doing. I could use this thing to develop ideas quickly without having to take the time drawing all these things to get different arrangements.

Westphal: It was doing a photographic realism that I was interested in, but it was too time-consuming and expensive to do with a camera. So this was a perfect solution.

Then I began using this machine as an adjunct to what I was doing in my teaching. By this time I was teaching a lecture class that was called Design VI, and it was sort of an introduction to design of architecture, textiles, ceramics, glass, all those things that I suppose people commonly think of as crafts, but they're mainly the decorative arts, living objects.

This was a class mainly designed for the majors in design who didn't have much background as a result of what was happening in the educational system with art being pushed out of the schools. You had students getting to the University who didn't know which end of the brush to stick in the paint. They had never had any experience. So beyond the lecture part there was a section every week where they worked in the studio. And I absolutely loved this class. I never thought of myself as anybody giving a lecture, and I think maybe this was instilled into me in the University when I was a graduate student, but I'm not going to go into that right now. I want to finish with this business about the copying machine and this class.

And so I decided that this was a very good way of people learning about natural objects that had a design quality. So I gave them a little problem. I would write everything out in a very concise form: the name of the problem, what materials they needed, and all. I had them go out and walk around the campus and find things that looked interesting to them, small objects, and bring them back and make a photograph of this thing, in the machine, with the copying machine, and then to write why they had selected it and what they thought was interesting about it. This was a paper that they had to turn in; I did weekly assignments of this sort. So these people turned in an assignment every week, and they went to a laboratory section and they also went to two or three lectures a week where I showed many, many slides and brought in guest lecturers and things like that.

Well, I absolutely loved teaching this class, and it grew until finally I ended up with 300 people in the room and 10 assistants to help with all the sections; it got to idiot proportions. I had insisted that the class be credit or not, no grades, because I didn't want to inhibit people who had no experience with any of the art things. I wanted them to really get involved in this without the thought of a grade hanging over their head. If they came to class, pretty much they passed. And if they didn't show up, well, then, they didn't.

Westphal: I'm not sure if this is one of the criteria of a university education, but I think in the kind of preparation that students have in high school today that everything is grade-oriented, that they have to get in the right school and all. They never have a chance to really enjoy, to experience the world around them. This is exactly what I was trying to show them, this wonderful visual world around them.

I would do things like having them make a map of an area that they walked through on the campus, and this map had to have visual things that they thought were interesting, that they could either draw, photograph, or something. Then this map had to be given to somebody else, and this person had to see if they could follow the map, and write a comment on the map. Well, this interested them very much because somehow I was pulling them into it; they weren't just observers sitting in a chair listening to something, they were experiencing something, and this is what I was trying to do.

Well, evidently the class caught on a little too well. You know, 300 is a ridiculous thing, and I had to use a microphone because I couldn't expand my voice to a large lecture hall. But it was very much fun teaching, and I really started teaching it because everybody in the group, in design, was griping about the horror of having to teach this class. At that point I think I was in charge of this little group. I said, "I don't want to hear this anymore; I'm going to teach the class, and you people can teach the classes you want, and I'll just teach this."

Well, I just absolutely loved it. And from that I eventually saw a need for something about textiles, other than just the practice, so that they know something historically about textiles. So I wrote a proposal for a textile history class, and then that went from one quarter to two quarters; it was too much to cover in one quarter and even too much in three quarters. We got it up to two quarters, and I loved teaching that, and that turned out to be a class that was graded. It was just this beginning class that wasn't graded.

Of course, I'm a real believer in pass-no pass. I am not sure that education is a means of getting a job. I think maybe it's a way of opening your vision to learning for the rest of your life. When I was teaching I was hoping to do this, not to give them a little checklist that was checked off that they had taken class number 100 and gotten a grade of B. Because after you've had some experience, you find out that when you get out in the world, nobody

Westphal: is interested in what grades you got in college, they're not even interested, pretty much, in whether you have a degree. They're interested in how you can grasp your material and present it to somebody else, certainly, if you are in the teaching area. I realize the university has to have rules and regulations, but sometimes they seem a little stupid.

Nathan: They somehow can get in the way?

Westphal: They can get in the way of learning and education.

Student Demand and Administrative Issues

Westphal: In some institutions you're very much under the rule of the administration in what you are doing.

Fortunately this was not the case in my teaching experience at the University [of California] at Davis. This was probably the most ideal situation because at the time I came in, it wasn't a department, this whole discipline we called "design" was being eliminated, as I mentioned earlier. Somehow they made the mistake and they got a few part-time people to finish off their students.

Well, these part-time people were very involved in what they were doing, all very excited, and instilled a spirit of wanting to go on in the students. When they tried to eliminate this design thing, the students marched to the dean's office and said that they didn't want to be denied this education, this was the first lively thing that had happened to them. So the administration said, "We'll let it go on a little while longer."

Then a number of factors came into this thing. When I first started in 1966 as a part-time teacher, one class a quarter, we had 24 people who had designated their major as design; by the time the second year passed, we had almost 150 majors. The second year they hired two new people to teach full-time, and I had been made full-time, and one of the other people was full-time, and the woman that taught art history was still part-time. Then they had to keep growing. Well, by the time I retired in 1979, we had close to 400 majors.

It has dropped down very much now, partially because the administration couldn't stand this design group to grow. They couldn't cope with it. They didn't have space, they didn't have the

Westphal: money, there were all these factors. Also the irritant wasn't there that said, the irritant being me, that a student should be able to make his own determination of what he wants to study when he has this one opportunity to go to the University, and if he has a desire to study there, there should be opportunities for him to study this.

Well, this isn't popular with the budget and the planning people, and I realize all this, but you have to make it strong to get anything. To get one grain, you have to ask for 100 grains. So I'm sure I was absolutely terribly difficult because I would always ask for more. They would give me something and I would say, "Thank you. Now, this is what I want next." I mean this is ridiculous behavior, but if you don't behave in a ridiculous manner you don't get anything.

Building a Program

Westphal: What I loved about teaching at Davis was that there was no structure pressed on us from above. There were certain areas that we were supposed to cover. One was in environment, one was in costume, and one was in textiles, and one was in history. But they didn't say what had to be in those courses. Since there hadn't been anything to any great extent before, we had to write our own course plans and get them approved, and we just sat down with many very wonderful meetings and decided what our philosophy was and how we wanted this thing to be. We all agreed that we wanted it not to be an imitation of something else that was going on in another university and we didn't sit down and read catalogues and say, "We're doing a revision of that course at that university." We said, "What are our skills, what are our interests, and what do we believe that students need?" And so we built this program.

We were in the College of Agriculture, and they had a basic structure. We thought this was a good structure, that it had a general education clinging to it. So the students at that time-- I don't know what it is now because I think it has changed--took, let's see if I can remember this, they took social sciences, natural sciences, humanities. I think these were 27 units in each of these things, then a core within what they thought was their designated major. So very much these students had a broad education to begin with, and there were no specific courses in those areas. If you were interested in--I think it wasn't natural science, I think it was just science in general--if you were interested in

Westphal: physics and mathematics, you could take that as your science requirement. But if you were interested in natural sciences you could take entomology or biology, whatever you wanted. You put together your own package in all these things.

Then when we got around to the design section we decided to follow this same thing, and we divided design at that time into costumes, textiles, and environment. The students put together their own packages in these things, but they must cross over and take at least one course in another area. If they were an environment major they had to take at least one course in textiles and at least one course in costume. So they had a wholeness, they understood how what they were taking related to the whole field of design.

Need for Advising

Westphal: We thought this was terrific, and the students evidently responded to it. However, the one catch of this is, this all sounds great on paper, but to put it into reality, you have students who only want a checklist. They want to go down and check all the requirements and be sure they get the requirements. If they do not have the requirements, they flounder. They have never had to make up their minds for themselves. They never figured out what they wanted to study, anything about it, they were just going along, with the important word "no," either by saying no, not choosing to take something, or absolutely failing at it, never giving it a try.

And with this I thought we really needed a resident psychologist to go along with this and get some of these people over the hump. It made the faculty much closer to the students because we had to do all this advising, to get them to think about it, decide where they were going and what they wanted to take. So you spent many hours.

This was the real flaw in the program, that we were spending so many hours advising. It eventually worked out that a young woman who had been part of a support staff, took courses at the University in advising, you know, on this plan that they have where staff members can take courses at the University. Then she became the advisor and did much of the advising. When she would find special problems, then she would send them back, so it was a cooperative effort, but it needed a staff person to support this.

Westphal: Design, as I said, was in a department called Applied Behavioral Sciences, that had in it all together six small little groups of people they didn't know what else to do with, so they piled them all together and called this department Applied Behavioral Sciences.

They made as chairman of this an agricultural education professor, Orville Thompson, who was terrific because somehow or other he had this feeling of letting people have self-determination. He was not the authoritarian in telling you what to do, he sort of sat back and saw what you wanted to do and facilitated it. It became a very large department, and eventually, became the largest department in the College of Agriculture. And of course I'm sure the reason we got split up was one, money, and two, power.

Nathan: Yes.

Westphal: You cannot have something that is maverick, that is radical, that is not conservative, assuming that much power. So it was split up.

You know, it was a marvelous thing because I had colleagues who were in all different disciplines and my viewpoint of the world broadened. I probably got more from the program than I gave it. We felt, I think, like a family, and it was exciting to go up to Davis and teach. You enjoyed the contact with the students, you enjoyed the contact with your colleagues, and to a certain extent with the administration.

It did change in time and things tightened up, and as they got tighter and tighter the communication between groups of people disappeared. People became enemies instead of members of the same family and there were feuds and they went on into what is I suppose the standpoint of being adversaries. You all build your little towers and fight each other from the top of the tower, pushing and shoving each other into the ground and trying to get your space and money and the whole thing, which I find so abhorrent in a university. I suppose they say it's a microcosm of the real world. Well, my real world doesn't have to have that sort of thing in it. I think there is enough for all of us. We don't have to be competitive.

Nathan: Well, this is an illuminating commentary and explanation of art and the University.

Retirement, Departmental Changes, and Clout

Westphal: It may have been a great day when I decided in 1979 I had had it, I wasn't going to another dean's meeting in my life, and I walked into the retirement office the next day and said, "I want to sign the papers immediately." They said, "Well, have you told the department?" I said, "No, I don't want to argue with them about it. I'm going to sign the papers here and then I'll go over and tell them." And they just looked at me. I think maybe everything was fine from that standpoint. There was a little moaning and groaning, "You can't do this to us." "But I've done it; I just can't take it anymore."

I must say that I was a little annoyed that within one month after I retired they chose to change the direction of the Department of Design in a way that I did not feel was based on equality for everybody that was teaching design. And it is very different now than it was at the time when I was there.

Nathan: Is it more hierarchical now?

Westphal: Yes. And it was only a--what did they call it? A discipline within the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences, or something like this. Then they gave it department status, but instead of maintaining this equality between three areas--environment, costume, and textiles--they called the whole thing Department of Environmental Design and they moved landscape architecture into it.

This move, this affiliation, was something that I had opposed. It had been proposed maybe two or three years before by some faction on the campus, and I did not think it reflected the needs particularly of our students nor the faculty at that time, the directions they were going. Obviously, the dean wanted this other thing to happen, and he had a strong-minded woman over there who was hassling him about this. The minute I resigned they did this.

I didn't object so much to the landscape people coming in as long as they did not have more numbers than the other, that it didn't topple the balance or change the program, for which we had many students. But that balance has been toppled and the design enrollment is lower.

I realize it had gotten big and out of hand, but if the students want something out of their university I think they should have the right to take the classes and not be proscribed by a master

Westphal: plan. I think this business of making all these master plans and then cutting down the people to fit the size of the bed that you have designed is a little bit ridiculous.

Nathan: The bed of Procrustes lives, doesn't it?

Westphal: Yes.

So this has occurred. It's also a matter of survival with the university ladder system that you have to be a strong enough group to survive on a campus, and I am not sure the Design department is strong enough politically to exist on the campus. I'm being very frank in these statements. The University probably will hate me for saying these things, but this is what I personally believe. And I think eventually you're going to get mowed under by more aggressive departments. It happens on space and it happens on FTE [full-time equivalent] and it happens on faculty promotions. And as long as Design was a part of the ABS department, there were enough people in that department who had been there a long time. You know, they were the Old Boys on the Davis campus, and we were politically protected, we were under the wing of these people. They couldn't hack away at us too much because of old-time affiliations with people who were in charge of that department.

Artists and designers are really no match for politically minded, aggressive university professors. There is nothing deadlier than what they will do to other people to build their own little empire and their own little tower. In the period of 13 years that I was there I was in six different offices. Somebody would decide that they liked the office that I was in, so I would get shoved off to another office. It became a little bit ridiculous the number of moves I made and the number of moves this whole area of Design made.

Nathan: Are these changes in emphasis or physical moves?

Westphal: Physical changes, these are physical changes I'm talking about. Every physical change you go through disrupts the whole process because it's like moving your residence. You pack everything up and put it in boxes and somebody carries it to a new place and you end up in a classroom or an office with boxes. You spend months getting yourself reorganized. You have to get your whole little physical trail through the university moved. If you're teaching a lecture class you get shoved down on the totem pole of who gets the desirable times and the desirable rooms to teach in.

Westphal: At least when Design was part of this larger thing there was more clout. There was also a marvelous office support system. As I told you, I didn't type, but any article I would write for an educational journal or a lecture that I was going to give somewhere was all typed by the staff. I had use of all these copying machines which I used a great deal. And there was a full audio-visual material center. All you had to do was to say to Bob Pershing, who was in charge of it, "I would like three projectors this day." And they would be there for you, they would be in running order, the bulbs would not burn out. Or you decide that you want to have your students do something on a piece of paper that is 20 feet high and 10 feet long, that piece of paper was in place.

It was marvelous to have this kind of support system. It made teaching very easy and you could do all sorts of flights of imagination because there was somebody there to help you with the technical things that you couldn't cope with on your own.

I'm not sure that this will exist. I don't know. I try to stay very free of Davis now. It's their problem now and I think they have to solve these problems themselves. But I loved being part of something that was growing and where I could try out my ideas, and if they didn't work I could say, "That doesn't work; we'll try it some other way." I think all of us at that time who were teaching were working on this same basis: We would try it, if it didn't work we would try something else, we would discuss it, "Why isn't it working? Does somebody else have a solution to this problem?"

At one time we had some of our classes coordinated, so the practice classes would be coordinated to what I was talking about in the textile lectures. So the people who were teaching the practice classes didn't have to spend their time giving background material and showing slides, they were coordinated with what I was doing in lectures. Courses would be grouped so that students would sort of take these things at the same time, so there wasn't always a repetition of the material. There was some, because each person has a different interpretation of a textile, but it wasn't starting from scratch every time.

It was very interesting to see what happened when this coordinated program was in place. I think all of us who participated in this felt that the students were much better prepared when they came to the studio to work when they had had this other experience. They weren't just flailing around and not having ideas; they had millions of ideas that they were getting from the arts. But of course this is very much the way I think.

Women in Academia

Westphal: I loved the teaching experience at Davis. It was a real challenge for me to get to know people, to learn things from other people, to really establish myself. This I think is very important, to be a professional woman who could hold a job, who could get to be a full professor in the man's world of the University. I think this gave us great confidence. I don't think that I have all these feminist attitudes, but I really believe in equality and I don't like the second-class status that women are accorded in any world.

I really enjoyed this thing of a world. I've always done things, but it has been much more on an individual basis; I wasn't part of a system. I really enjoyed this, being able to move through the system up to the top thing. This gave me great satisfaction, although I know that from questionnaires I have gotten and panels I have been asked to be on, I am perceived as a feminist because of achieving something or other. I don't think I'm there.

I know once they did a television tape and they were trying to get the women on the panel to express the times that they felt they were discriminated against. I don't think I ever have been. I said, "I don't feel this about this, that these are all put-downs. The put-downs are if you take them that way, but they don't have to be that way." I'm sure we all experience these things, but, my gosh, I think men experience being put down too and that this is just part of being human.

I take great delight and pleasure in doing this oral history, and now I think I enjoy putting down on forms that I'm a Professor Emeritus. I like the sound of this. Not that I feel very much part of the University now, and I'm very willing to be very critical of what I didn't like about the University system. I don't like the old-boy school of thought and the rigidity and many of these things, but there are very good parts and I very much believe in a University education and being part of it. I like being part of something bigger. I like the ability to be able to say what I think about something. I like to be critical, not nasty critical, but observing how I feel about something.

I think that all the lip-service the University gives to women in academia, it just isn't so. They are a very, very tiny percentage. I suspect when I started maybe--I don't know the actual statistics--but I think if you really checked out the Davis campus they maybe have 1 percent more now of faculty women than when I was there.

Westphal: There're not very many. They have plenty of secretaries and all the staff people, support staff is mainly women, but their professorial staff is mainly men.

I don't think God created two kinds of brains, a man's brain and a woman's brain. I think there're just brains, and it's how we intend to use them and what our prejudices say about who's going to do what. Certainly I have watched friends of mine raise their children and think some of them have done fine jobs and some have done terrible jobs, and I'm not always sure that it's the women who are doing the good jobs of raising the children.

Nathan: That's interesting.

Westphal: I don't think maybe that the woman's place is necessarily at home taking care of the children. Some women would be better off out earning the money and letting the more sensible male partner take care of the children and meet the nurturing needs of these children. I mean I think we have to be open to change and do the best thing we can. It sounds Pollyannish or phony, but I really believe that people don't have stereotyped roles and that everybody has to have the opportunity to try at least doing what they think they want to do.

At Davis, in design, the majority of students, by far the majority of students, are women. And yet the present administration is trying to give the courses to professionals. They are job-oriented--professional jobs that are filled by men and only men are acceptable. I mean it's the most ridiculous sort of thing. Not that I'm thinking that the University should train women to do women's work, but I think you have to listen to what the women are saying, what kind of education they want, and make it possible for them to work in the costume arts or in the textile arts, instead of reducing those classes and building up the architectural drawing classes, which I think is happening right now, the planning of these things.

I suppose maybe it's an attempt to interest more men in this area, but why do we have to have departments balanced in men and women? Why can't we have it for whoever wants to take it and wherever the interest lies? If they have enough for six sections of the costume class--heaven help them if they ever do, they'd go crazy--and only one of architectural drawing, well, why not do it that way? Why have the quota? They will say at the other end of the line, "Well, we can't train people or educate people if there aren't jobs out there for them." Well, if they're only educating them for jobs, I think the whole role of the University has somehow lost its track. I'm a product of the University that was idealistic and that educated people for the rest of their lives, not just to get a buck.

Nathan: I suppose also the jobs for which you train someone may very shortly change into something totally different.

Westphal: Yes, yes. I mean look how fast things are moving in the computer industry. I mean here we have the real geniuses in the ability to use a computer to hack into other people's affairs. This is being done by the teenagers. They have all this ability to do it but they don't have the moral commitment to know that you don't read other people's mail.

Nathan: Interesting.

Westphal: They don't convict those people of breaking into other people's computer files who have gone through the University. These people have developed a moral commitment to what they're doing. But they're getting the high school kids, who are learning these skills very quickly, the little tricks that the monkey does, and all this sort of thing. This is something that they learn very quickly, but they don't have the ethical standards to go with it. And it's changing very rapidly.

Somebody was over here the other night, saying, "Oh, we just saw this new computer that has a wonderful graphic machine. You don't have to be tied in anymore to all these little dots and points and all, you just draw and it does all this stuff graphically. You should go out and see it." Well, maybe one should, since they're advancing very fast. Well, when they do it so that they can get quick printout, then I will be interested. You know, to just have it on the screen, I can have all this going on in my mind, but I would like something concrete, in the same way I can get something concrete when I manipulate the Xerox machine. I get this sketchbook image that I can then develop into something else. I can put it in a file and I can look at it, and I don't have to have it all cluttered up here, and I have something to begin with when I am reproducing. But, we'll see.

Nathan: Yes.

Grants, and "New Treasure for Tutankhamen"

Nathan: Would you care to talk about this? In 1977 and 1978 you had a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Craftsman's Grant. Did that give you an opportunity to do something that you might not have been able to do otherwise?

Westphal: Yes, yes. That did. The "New Treasure for Tutankhamen" came out of that grant. What that enabled me to do was to spend all that money for all those color heat transfers and use the machine to the utmost. It also gave me time to do it. It was in conjunction with a sabbatical leave, so I had time to work much more consistently than I did when I was teaching two or three days a week and I was on one day, off one day, and very pulled apart in time periods of being able to work. So I had a much more concentrated time to work on these things. I also had a small research grant from the University. The combination of those two things made it possible, because in one of those quilts I was doing I was using over \$100 worth of pieces of paper from the machine. I wasn't used to spending a lot of money on my art; I would do things that were rather inexpensive.

And I must say, all the years, from probably 1968 'til last year, I had a research grant from the University. It was never much--it would vary from \$300 to the highest one, \$900--but I could use it for materials. This helped a great deal because as soon as I got using the machines, the costs went way up. All the photographic stuff and all the Xerox machine uses money rapidly, so this was very helpful in that.

Cutting Ties with the University

Westphal: To my great annoyance, last year the University cut off my research grant, with a little curt note. This wasn't last year, it was the year before. I don't know when it was. It was just as I was finishing up the paper clothing show over in San Francisco. I had had it up until July 1 of that year, and I had this commitment to do this show. I was having a lot of photographic work. And I finally went up in June, and I said, "Well, I want to hear about this grant. You know, I've got to pay these bills." Well, hadn't I heard? And I said no. Well, the accountant said, "Don't you go over. Let me see if I can find out what happened." I think he knew. It had been rejected, but they hadn't notified me. I didn't get notified probably until about the end of July, and a little note saying that the project was fine, but they didn't have the money.

I got so damn mad at those people. I was furious. I wrote a letter, which I didn't mail the first day, and I looked at it the next morning, and I thought, "That does it. I have cut my ties with the University. We just clipped the umbilical cord, and I went my way and the University went their way." I think it is

Westphal: devastating to do this to retired University professors who have a small retirement and are continually doing research, publishing or exhibiting whatever their field is, and then to cut off funds in the middle of this, without warning.

Nathan: As long as you're continuing to produce you would think it would be logical to continue support.

Westphal: Well, the University goes on with lip-service, you know, "We want to have our emeritus professors continue to be producing, to be part of the group." At Davis they cut off your perks. You still have to pay dues to the faculty club if you eat there. In former years the dues were just waived. All these various things. For a long time all I had was a parking permit. And I thought, "Well, this is good because I could go down and use the library at Berkeley and I had something to do with my car." I could leave it on the Berkeley campus because they would honor it.

Well, they cut off my research grant, and I was just furious because the University gives all this feeling they want their people to continue. I never got an office when I retired. They said they didn't have enough space. Then, when they cut off my research grant, I said, "Okay, I don't want a mailbox anymore," and sent in my name. The year after I retired they didn't have my name anymore in the catalogue--I don't know if it's in now--you know, and the list of addresses. Ed's continues to be in it, as professor emeritus, my name is not in it. I told them I hadn't died yet, and I think they put it back in. But then this. And the last thing was that I didn't get a parking permit. I got a little card I can put on my dashboard, but it only allows me to use the Davis campus. I don't use the Davis campus that much anymore because I have cut ties with it completely.

But it annoyed me, and I don't think that's the way that you treat people, but fortunately I can get along and now can spend the money for my work. I think it's important to do it, even if the things don't sell. I'm doing it, and I think this is something that I enjoy doing, so Social Security can pay for the heat transfers now.

Nathan: It's sort of ungracious.

Westphal: Yes. It was not a nice thing to do, but I guess one shouldn't think the University is nice. I think it was pretty cruel and pretty nasty. The administration doesn't care, I'm only a piece of paper, you know. But I feel I'm a real person, and I feel I made a real contribution to that campus as far as their visual awareness

Westphal: is concerned, through exhibits, through being generous enough to put the student textiles in the dean's office and the faculty club and such, so people would not only be aware of design but there would be something more interesting on the wall than a photograph of a football team or the president of the University or something like this.

And I just think it was most ungenerous, and I was very annoyed when it happened and really very hurt, and I guess I still am, because this was a place I felt very vitally involved with. All the time I was teaching there I thoroughly enjoyed it, until the last meeting that I went to at the College of Agriculture, and I thought, "What am I doing sitting here in this insane place?" [laughing] Early the next morning I went up and said, "I am signing the papers. I'm retiring on April first."

The moment had come and I recognized it. It wasn't planned. Believe me, I didn't know when I went that afternoon that I was going to retire the next day. I just thought, "This is it. I can't be part of this foolishness." I knew exactly how Debra Rapaport felt years before when she got her tenure and then she suddenly resigned. She didn't want to live in Davis for the rest of her life.

V TEXTILE ARTS, WEARABLE ART, AND CREATIVITY

Fiberarts Box of Materials

Nathan: I know that you have done something with a dog mask. Would you like to tell me about it?

Westphal: These things are for Fiberarts Magazine. They're doing an issue on creativity. And someone back there, maybe the editor, Chris Timmons, decided that they would ask 10 textile artists in the United States if they would spend some time doing something from a box of materials that are sent. You have to agree to document it in some way with something written, and photographs, and send the piece, and then it is going to be a traveling exhibit.

Since this was something I so often did to students, giving them something and saying you had 10 minutes to do something with the thing, I believe, still do, that if you ask a student to do something you have to be willing to do it yourself. Very often, when I was teaching, I would be working at the same time the students were. This wasn't always easy for them because my powers of concentration are very great, and sometimes I wouldn't hear their questions; I was off in my world. But this was all right. This, I think, was good for them to understand: that there was a concentration and seriousness about doing things, that it wasn't just a show, that it wasn't just a little problem that I gave them to keep their little hands busy, that I was interested in solving this problem too.

So both Ed and I are part of this group. Not everyone who was asked decided to do this thing. They had about 14 people on the list, and I think then they narrowed it down to about six and then they got some more replacements. I think some of the replacements were better than the original choices. I could have told them that

Westphal: the people they had on the first list weren't going to play that game because they are interested in another thing. This is really nonprestigious. I was interested in it because I wanted to see what would happen.

Well, the box of materials came, and I almost categorically rejected everything in the box, because I consider myself, I guess, basically a painter. I print textiles, but that's painting. I draw, but that's also--it's making marks on things, it's not structural things. I don't like to weave. I know how, I took classes, and I have woven, but I don't like it, I don't like all the tangled strings. I don't enjoy this. So, as I approach everything, if I enjoy doing it, I do it; if I don't enjoy doing it, I don't do it.

So the box of materials came, and there was only one piece of material that I could have printed on, and I wasn't sure that that didn't have a finish on it that would have rejected dye.

This whole business of printing on textiles depends very much on technical information. You have to have the right kind of dye for the fiber and there cannot be a finish on the cloth that will prevent that dye from penetrating that fiber, if it is a dye that penetrates on a water basis. There is another kind of dye that penetrates a manmade fiber with heat and it melts it slightly into the surface. Well, I think this piece of cloth they sent had a finish on it, and so I knew I couldn't just print on it.

One of the key things about this box was it had about 30 different materials in it, and you had to agree to use at least 10 or 12. You could add other things to it. You could do anything you wanted. It could not be over four feet high. It had certain width limitations, because it was going to be a traveling show.

Nathan: Did everybody get the same materials?

Westphal: Everybody got the same materials. This will, I think, be an interesting issue of the magazine when it comes out, because I am just dying to see what other people did, and what they used and what they rejected. I can only say that in this house I used one kind of materials, which Ed completely rejected, and the materials that I rejected he used. We had very little overlapping of what we selected in that box of materials and what we were using.

Well, this was very lucky for me because I use a great deal of material. I did the first one and it got too big, so I did a second one, and I decided it was too fragile to pack, that I would

Westphal: have to have a professional packer do it, and I didn't want to go to that expense, because there wasn't that much money involved in it. So I did a third one; I got the box first, and then I had the piece not get larger than the box. But I'm still going on in this construction project.

As I was working on the first one I had it set up on the little table in the living room, and by this time I had put it on a stand. First it was to be wearable, and then I realized they couldn't display it. So then I put it on a stand. I had been working on some paintings with dogs with masks. The masks were three-dimensional and the painting of the dog was flat on the canvas. I had a few of these masks around because I made them in multiples. This was of Sam, the Springer Spaniel, of his beautiful dark and light head. I thought it looked like an Egyptian mummy head. So I did it in the same way. I made it of strips of cloth embedded in gesso, and then I painted it.

Samurai Warrior Costume and Neo-Dogmatism

Westphal: I had these things around, and I was fooling around with this thing and I dropped one of these things, and I put it on the top of the construction, and we were laughing that the samurai warrior now was a dog. Here was a dog in samurai armor, and Sam, and all this business, and playing the word game with it. The dogs came in, and they both saw this thing and they backed off. Molly started her bugling and Sam really decided he was going to get this thing out of here, and so he would creep up and bark very loud and then he would retreat and was really protecting us from this thing.

Well, it was so funny that we were just dying of laughter. The camera happened to be there with film in it, so I snapped some pictures of him attacking the warrior. But it evidently was only the light on the copper that I had used that attracted him, because it sits around now and he doesn't pay any attention. He never did it again after that one time.

Nathan: You were saying that this experience with your dog and the warrior figure head influenced you?

Westphal: I still have more materials in the box. Of course I have added to it, and I'm very interested in going on and working in this three-dimensional way, which I haven't worked in very much before. It's

Westphal: been very casual. Now I'm going into really things that are free-standing. I must say about these things, they are all wearable, although I have immobilized them on stands. You can actually put them on and wear them, should you want to. I'll get back to this wearable art a little later.

Right now I can't envision any of these samurai warriors without Sam connected with it in some way, either a mask or in the last one that is completed (it's up at Davis now, in an exhibit at the Pence Gallery on fantasy fashion). I have just put a sort of a locket arrangement around the samurai warriors in part of the costume, and one of them has a Polaroid photograph of a piece of tie-dyed paper I had done, and the other piece has two locket things on it. It doesn't open up, it's just two separate things. The other one is a Polaroid photograph of Sam's head. So Sam is in that one, at this time, but I saw it just yesterday, in the exhibit, and I decided that it too needs a mask of some kind on it. When I get it back, I'm going to elaborate more on it for this show that I'm going to have at the UC gallery.

Nathan: Oh, you are going to have a show here?

Westphal: Well, no, that's at Davis. It's in the Design Department gallery. And that's when all these dog things, this "Neo-Dogmatism" will be there. Fortunately, Dolph Gotelli, who's in charge of the gallery, goes along with this idiocy of calling the show "Neo-Dogmatism."

I think it's kind of funny that all these people on the Davis campus (I'm not sure that the people in the Art Department would be happy to hear me say this) but they're involved with word games with their art. They're involved with animals. Roy de Forest, with his dog paintings. And Gilhooly with all the other, frogs, hippopotamus, all these things in ceramics. And Bob Arneson with all the real tongue-in-cheek things. William Wiley. All these people.

When I was teaching there I was at the design end, which is very separate from art on the campus. They're in separate departments, and there is not much interchange between the two. There is some with the students, but mainly they're very separate. I suppose this is natural because these people feel very established and very much part of the art picture, and rightly so; they do very wonderful things. But I also think there're some wonderful things going on on the design side that are not given the publicity of painting and sculpture. It's just one of the facts of life one lives with. But this, supposedly, isn't the reason you do it; you do it because you enjoy doing it. And I really believe this, it

Westphal: isn't just a little face that I'm putting on. I do it because I enjoy it. Because after one's retired from teaching, you wouldn't have to do it if you didn't enjoy it. Before I taught this last time at Davis, all the time, between my two teaching jobs of 16 years, I was very active, very busy doing things, but not doing things with commercial success or prestige or whatever, just because I liked to do it.

Nathan: And it hasn't ever failed you, that excitement?

Westphal: No. The excitement is there, and I make no differentiation in my way of thinking of whether it's a painting or whether I am making a piece of clothing. I am not going to say "doing some food," because I am not a very good cook. I find it is too routine. Occasionally I will surprise myself and do something that looks and tastes wonderful, but I'm not a particularly good cook. That isn't what I'm involved in.

Wearable Art

Westphal: In fact, I'm going to go onto this wearable art now because I think that this comes in. For a very long time, I'd say maybe 20 years, I had been doing things that we now call wearable art. It would be taking a fabric that I had printed and I would make it into a dress that I would wear. And there wasn't another one like it in the world, and most people probably wouldn't be caught dead in it, but I wore them because I really enjoyed this. And I believe very much that everything around you is part of an environment, and if it is possible to make it, I try and make it.

And then suddenly Paul Smith, of the American Craft Museum, knew that I did these things, as I would wear them to openings or things like that. And a woman in New York called Julie Schaefer was opening a gallery that was just going to sell wearable art, so he sent her out to see me, and she looked at some of these things and was talking to me about this. Well, I sent some things back, and she sold a few, but this isn't relevant because it wasn't that important, and I do it very much on a spontaneous basis, as everything else. If I feel like making a piece of wearable art, it's that; it doesn't go on continuously for years.

Suddenly this thing bloomed. And, of course, right now I think it's gone pretty commercial, and every little boutique has wearable art in it, whether it is this or not. I don't consider

Westphal: something that is made in 20 copies all alike wearable art, or even a slight variation. I think it has to say something visually and it can't be something that you turn out every day. I don't know. There are some things that I think are very good wearable art; in others I think people don't understand what they're doing and they have to make a fast buck.

I still have this feeling about wearable art that it must be beautifully constructed and beautifully made and show good craftsmanship, and to get this and still have spontaneity is hard. There are a few people who are doing this who are wonderful at this and have great imagination and seem to be retaining this spontaneity, good craftsmanship, and really the thing says something visually. It doesn't necessarily have a message that says something that "I am a tree" or "a telephone post" or "a dog," or something like this, but it says something about the person who wears it. And also it becomes sort of a kind of sculpture that moves.

It's ever-changing, maybe like a painting that changes, because it changes when the person wears it, and it changes how the person wears it. It's very fascinating, it becomes a show in itself. I don't think it is well displayed in a museum; it is always pretty static and it doesn't really show the possibilities.

The other night I was watching a Mozart opera.

Nathan: Oh yes, "Clemenza di Tito?"

Westphal: Yes. And I thought, "Well, now, this is how wearable art should be displayed," in which a filmmaker like Jean-Pierre Ponnelle has the imagination to dramatize this. A film should be made with wearable art because that was what these people were wearing, it was wearable art, these wonderful things, and the way they moved through these settings in Rome.

Well, this is what should happen with this wearable art. It shouldn't be just something on a coat hanger in a museum, or a model. It shouldn't be on fashion models, because fashion models aren't real people; they mince and they prance and they aren't real. In fact most of these wearable artists that I talk to or got letters from when I was doing the lecture for Vienna, felt that they were doing this because they wanted to move what they were doing out of the elitism of the museum and out into the real world. So they liked to do things for fairs, or to wear out on the street just to make people aware and look at something different that was

Westphal: going on. They didn't like the idea of it just being hung on a wall in a museum with only a few people seeing it, they wanted it to be out in the mainstream, out where people were. And they wanted it to move and to change.

Well, I think that's the way I feel about these things too, but I don't know how you reconcile this into our present-day structure of what gets exhibited and how it is exhibited and who gets to touch it and who doesn't get to touch it, who gets to buy it and who doesn't have the money to buy it even if they want to.

Nathan: Also, would it be a personal sort of link between the creator and the person who responds to it?

Westphal: Yes. They would each add something to it. The person who made it, perhaps, would only visualize this thing in one way, and then the person who put it on would visualize it in a different way.

I had an experience with one of the things that I did a long time ago for a liturgical art show. I don't know how long ago this was. It was an invitational show, and I did two pieces for the show, but when I get going on something I usually work in series. So I will do almost always as many as three, four, or five, sometimes many more that I will keep on going with this thing until I get it to the point where I feel I can't go any farther with it for a while, and then I drop it. I usually don't get back; something has gotten me off on a tangent and I go another direction on this thing. One of these things was a cope.

Nathan: Did it have angels on it?

Westphal: No, it's not the "Cope of the Angels." It's one that is called "Pale Rainbow," and it has patterns that are taken from Italian Renaissance cut-velvet textiles, and it's printed on panné velvet, which is a synthetic material. Then I drew outlines of the shapes of the motives in these textiles on a piece of paper, put it in the black and white Xerox machine and made 50 copies of it. And then I colored them in with a dye that comes in a crayon form and I printed these on this thing. So it is a one-piece textile because this panné velvet is very beautiful without any seams; it drapes in a marvelous way. And I printed it so it looked like it was all pieced like the chasubles from the church treasury in Venice.

Well, then many years later, Ellen Hauptli, who works in wearable art, mainly pleated things, did a performance, I think it was a benefit performance, at a church in San Francisco where

Westphal: she used models and some of this wearable art. She had dancers mainly. It was a very, very interesting thing. It was done in the round in a little social hall of the church; I think that was what it was. The thing was divided into sort of a cross pattern that the dancers moved on, and they wore these costumes.

Well, the dancer that wore mine wore it with the long pieces instead of being front and back, she wore those out over her arms. So this became a horizontal piece rather than a vertical piece. She turned it, as she came out with it, the right way, walking very stately, and then she suddenly spun and turned these things so the long pieces went out over her arms and she moved around and it was like a butterfly. It was the most amazing thing.

And here was this transformation, because I had seen it as a very static thing. I had worn it. I always thought that it would be fun to wear this thing if I ever went to a fancy opening. Well, I'd never had the courage to wear this thing because it's pretty ridiculous-looking. I had photographs taken in it and that sort of thing. But here she was in a completely active way, and it became something else and it moved in a different way. Well, this is fascinating. This is what happens when something changes to something else, and they do a creative thing with the same piece of cloth that I had done and only thought of it in one way.

So this is why I think that these textiles that I'm doing right now, these samurai things, I'm interested in keeping them wearable. You can untie the little strings, take them off the stands, and they become something else; somebody else can wear them. But if you don't know what else to do with it, it has a stand, it has a place to sit. It doesn't have to be folded in a drawer, it doesn't have to be on the wall.

Nathan: It really has other dimensions?

Westphal: Yes, it can change. And when I do a textile I want the back to be as beautiful as the front. So you can turn it inside out and you have something else going on in most of these things. Or you can look inside. In all these samurai things, because of this wire structure that is all covered with a telephone wire, you can look inside and there are little wires hanging in it, there are little metal things hanging in it. One of them has the Shinto strip of paper, this folded paper, that occurs at Shinto shrines. The insides of the paper kimonos all have magic symbols hanging on them as the Japanese wear little talismans hanging on the inside of their kimonos. I just think it's fun to go this complete way with these things.

Nathan: In the samurai version that I see on the stand, was this the fabric that had the finish, and were you able to do something with it?

Westphal: Yes, that was the fabric that had the finish, but because I was putting it on with a heat transfer--it's the same sort of heat transfer that people use on T-shirts; the bonding, the resin is in the transfer--I don't have to worry about any penetration. It's just on the surface, it isn't in the fiber.

Nathan: But it will retain the image?

Westphal: It'll retain the image, but of course this isn't going to go through the washing machine. T-shirts, you know, as we see them around, they're beautiful when they start out with these heat-transfer images, and probably by the tenth washing they get a little pale. But that's their life anyway, you don't wear a T-shirt forever, and the samurai thing doesn't get washed, it doesn't get dirty.

Wearable art, mainly, doesn't get dirty. It isn't wash and wear. It's something that you wear for special occasions or you have it around. There's somebody who has bought a large number of pieces from this gallery in New York, Julie's gallery, and she has them--I've seen a photograph in the magazine--she has them displayed on the wall, and she has hooks on the wall and she hangs her coat or her jacket on the wall, as a painting. This can happen too. But they don't essentially need a lot of care because they aren't a real utility item. They aren't the thing you wear every day. You only wear it for special occasions.

Nathan: You said at one point that you were amused and entertained by the image of an animal dressed in human clothes, and I wonder whether that had some connection in your essential feeling that the samurai needed the dog's head?

Westphal: I don't think I thought of it in that relation. I definitely thought of it in the drawings that I was doing previously. Unfortunately, I don't know the Japanese artist's name, he's very famous, and he's done a whole series of brush drawings of animals wearing clothing.³ And it's all related to the organ grinder of my youth, the little monkey dressed up on the top of the organ grinder, the animals at the circus that wear clothes, the blankets on horses.

³Katherine Westphal later recalled that the artist was Chōjū Jimbutsu Giga, who painted scrolls in the 12th century.

Westphal: You know, animals do wear clothes. It's just different shaped clothes than we wear. And we're beginning to wear capes and ruana that are very similar to the horse blanket that a horse wears. You know, after it's through exercising it gets its blanket on, with little tapes around the edge. Down the street [Belrose Avenue], in the large white house with the gate, the people have two large Great Danes. In cold weather those dogs go for a walk, one on each side of the man who takes them, and they have coats on. This year they have red-and-white checked coats with black tape edges on them, and they're very elegant as they walk along the street in their coats.

They do exactly the same thing on the edges of these dog coats that Bonnie Cashin does on her clothing, except she uses leather. It is this taped edge, and it's exactly like the horse blankets, they're all taped up. Of course, for the same reason, utility. It keeps it from tearing and you don't have to have a bulky edge.

Building Up, Tearing Down

Nathan: You mentioned that your way of working was to build up and tear down. Can you say a little more about why that works for you?

Westphal: Why it works for me is because I don't start with a fixed plan as one would start if one were constructing a building. Then you have to have a basic thing so you know how long to cut the beams so that the roof will really fit on the wall structure after you build it. When I start I just, no matter what it is, have some sort of a basic idea. Sometimes it's an object, sometimes it's involved with a way of working, and I begin. Then I look at what I have and add something else to it.

I think I can talk about this more about the samurai figures, the samurai wearable art, because at that time I did not know it was going to be samurai. I just knew I had to do something with these materials [from Fiberarts Magazine], and I had to learn how to work with them. I had to construct a textile in some way out of these materials. So I just made a bunch of shapes of pieces of textiles. Some of them were as small as 4 x 8 inches, others got to 12 x 12. All these various things that I used, shoestrings and metal discs, and--what else was in there?

Nathan: A piece of yarn?

Westphal: That was a piece of a floor mop, a white floor mop, that I pulled apart so I could get out all these pieces of white, lengths of white yarn. What was absolutely fascinating is when I pulled the mop apart I discovered the shoelaces and the mop were exactly the same length. Normally, in using yarn, this would be sort of like roving; it would be on a cone and it would go on endlessly and you would have to make a decision of whether it was going to be an endless element that you were using or a short element. Well, that was all taken care of because the shoelaces and the strands of the mop were, oh, I'd say roughly 24 to 30 inches long.

So I had short lengths that I was putting together, and I was interweaving them with lock washers that became a metallic section in these things. So I did all this number of things. One of them I put together with long copper strips. I have no idea what the uses of these things were, but they were about six inches long, a half inch wide, and they had various holes in them, up and down.

Nathan: Did that come in the packet?

Westphal: It came in the packet. These, I think, were things that they bought at a hardware store that was going out of business. They were manufactured, and I discovered there were about five or six different varieties of holes and notches in these strips of copper. When I wove these all together with shoestrings and the pieces of mop, suddenly it looked to me like samurai armor, and that's how the whole idea of samurai armor evolved.

Well, here are these pieces. So I began building them up, laying them on top of each other, on the floor, and putting them together in different ways. Then I decided I wanted to make a piece of wearable art, and so I took these things to a Xerox machine, color Xerox, and had heat transfers made. Then I printed these on a piece of cloth that came with it and cut this up. Then I began piling these things on top of each other. Sometimes I would take them away, sometimes I would put them on top, sometimes I would reorganize them. It's the way I used to approach a painting. I would paint out a section or add a new section or take a piece of paper or fabric and glue it on. It's always building up and tearing down and looking at the results.

Unfortunately, in the process very often you destroy something that was better than what you ended up with, and you can't go back: it is a changing thing. I think with time you learn when it is right and you stop at that point. But whether this is the right place to stop, I never know, because you never know what could have happened if you had gone farther. There is no absolute in this

Westphal: thing. The whole thing is sort of maybe a game one plays with oneself, that you never know exactly when the stopping point is, when it is going to be most successful, but it's always a challenge. So this is what I'm saying. You can't build a house that way. If you build a house, it might not stand up. But with fiber art or a painting, you can, because it isn't that crucial.

Anyhow, it is marvelous--I suppose a decorative thing rather than a functional thing. And maybe that is why this way of working is very possible; it is the way I'm happiest working. I can't do something and then have a plan for it and then execute it.

When I went to Cal I took an awful lot of classes from Worth Ryder, in painting, and he had a little system of education which was marvelous for establishing a logical way of thinking and how you went about working. But this was not a way I could work. He would have you analyze the composition that you were eventually going to paint, in five or six different ways, as far as line and space and texture and color and various things, and you did a series of five or six little sketches before you actually did the big thing.

Well, I rapidly found that this didn't work for me. So I would do the big thing and then I would do the little analytical things. You know. Thinking all the time, you know, that I was fooling somebody. But I really wasn't fooling anybody: he knew I was doing it, backwards. [laughter] But this is very inherent to the way I work, that I cannot make all these plans. If I make all the plans, it usually goes wrong.

Planning, and Making Paper

Westphal: On the paper kimonos, for example, there is a very definite organization because the size is formal and it is using modules and being put together. But I know that basic structure is what it is eventually going to have. But within that I make changes constantly.

The size of the little pieces of paper I patch together always remains the same because I have cut them up, and I have a box--I showed you last time--a box of pieces of paper. Well, at that point I think the box of pieces of paper were all white and they're about $2\frac{1}{4}$ x $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, each little piece of paper. They start out with a 9 x 9 inch square of paper that I have made, and the 9 x 9 inch

Westphal: square of paper is determined by the size of the screen I'm using to pull the pulp out of the vat. That size screen is determined by the size of the vat, and the vat that I keep the pulp in is my laundry tray. The paper I pull out cannot be larger than this because I don't have room for my hands to move along the side. So that determines that.

Nathan: Could I ask you what you make the pulp out of?

Westphal: The pulp is made from sheets of various kind of fibers that I buy by mail order, mainly. The basic thing is manila hemp. This is a very long fiber, very, very strong, it's slightly tan in color and it is produced for paper makers. This comes in a very tough sheet that has been processed with the water and ground and then it is put in the sheet. Well, this sheet then I soak, and tear it up in little pieces and soak it further. The second fiber I use is linen, and this also comes in this sheet form, and the third one is cotton linters.

The linen is very strong and has a long fiber too and has to be soaked in order to tear it. The cotton linters is very short fibers, it's white, and you can just tear it with your fingers when it is dry. When I first learned to use paper I learned with cotton linters because it's cheap, and you can also recycle paper, paper bags, and you can add color by using colored paper bags, you know, you can get colored pulp. But these things tend to be kind of brittle.

The first paper kimonos I made, I used recycled paper and cotton linters, and I found that this wasn't a very strong material, although it had beautiful color quality. There's nothing more beautiful than a brown grocery bag, but it doesn't have a strong quality. So then I began investigating and finding out which were the strong fibers. First I used just the manila hemp for strength and the cotton linters for color, which gave me a whiter paper.

Then one of the paper makers came through the area; we were talking about paper making and she said that she uses almost all linen now. I didn't know where to get it. She was from Canada. So she sent me some. And I like the linen because it has this very white look and it's very strong. So the paper I make now is a much better quality than when I began. And these three fibers are soaked together--

Nathan: In water?

Westphal: Just in water. Then, after they have soaked overnight, I take a small quantity of each one of these and put it in the blender with more water.

Nathan: A kitchen blender?

Westphal: A kitchen blender. And I liquify it. Then I put that with additional water into the laundry tray. This is not a fast method because I have to blend things in the blender for one vat that I'm working with, so maybe I have to do six or eight blender-fuls for this. Then I pull the paper screen out. I get this far, and then when the pulp, as I pull it out, gets too thin--

Nathan: Is the screen sunk into the laundry tray? Is it underneath?

Westphal: No. It's two little frames. One is the deckle and one is a frame exactly the same size that has a piece of plastic screening on it. I put the two together and I lower this into the vat of pulp, and as I pull this to the surface I rock it sideways and back and forth, just slightly. So I am moving this thing in two directions constantly. It isn't just one direction, it is once side by side and once backward and forward.

Nathan: So you are catching the more dense pieces?

Westphal: I'm catching the pulp as I bring the screen to the surface. Then I have it to the surface, then I have to bend it slightly to one side or the other so the water goes out of the screen without taking the pulp with it. Then I take the deckle off. Then I take this frame with the pulp on top and I turn it out onto a piece of manmade fiber that is called a Handi-wipe--it's what you use to clean the kitchen--and this has little openings in it. I have this in sheets and I lay these on my kitchen counter and I turn this out onto that and then I remove some of the water with a sponge before I take the screen off.

Then this piece of pulp on the paper dries, and I have to keep turning the paper and changing newspapers underneath it to absorb the water. Eventually all the water dries out of it. If I would leave it completely alone it would have a very rough surface. But when I was a watercolor painter I preferred to paint on hot-press paper rather than cold-press. I like a smooth surface.

Nathan: So hot-press paper has the--

Westphal: Smoothest surface. And the cold-press has a rough surface.

Westphal: I like to work on smooth fabrics when I print. I print on panne velvet because it is very shiny and smooth, and I like this hard surface of the paper. So when the paper is almost dry, I take it up and I put it between sheets of white felt. I run the iron over it, so I am hot-pressing the paper because I am eventually going to put a heat transfer on this, and I get a better registration of image on the smooth paper than on the rough paper. So I'm creating hot-press paper.

If my vat of pulp is producing too thin a layer, and I don't want to take the time to add more pulp to it or I'm getting ready to empty the vat, I will do a two- or a three-ply paper by just putting one on top of the other in this wet stage.

Nathan: Will it adhere?

Westphal: It adheres when it's wet. It does not adhere when it's dry. The Japanese have something in their vat of paper so that they can pull one sheet of paper and lay it on top of another and the two pieces do not adhere. When the Japanese are pulling paper out of their vats on their screen, they put one right on top of the other as they are working, and then this whole stack of paper is taken to another little building and they are lifted apart very carefully and put on very long boards and set up to dry.

Nathan: Yes, I've seen that.

Westphal: This certainly simplifies what you're doing, but I think unless you want to get a lot of equipment sitting around you and go into this thing and this is all you do, you have to modify your ways of working. This works for me.

When I was learning to make paper, I suppose this is six years ago or something like this, there was this great craze in the area for making paper, and I thought, "Well, I know nothing about how to make paper," so I went down to Fiberworks and took a class from Nance O'Banion, and this method she used to teach people how to make paper. I really got absolutely fascinated with just the technique of making paper. So for six months I made at least six to eight sheets of paper every day. I had the laundry tray completely filled with pulp all the time.

I was learning how to make a beautiful sheet of paper, this was what I was trying to do, and I knew I had to do it every day. It's like practicing the piano: you have to do it every day to develop any kind of skill at doing it. Well, I ended up with a

Westphal: stack of paper of various pulps and various colors and things like this, but I didn't know what to do with it. It was a nice little stack of nine-inch-square pieces of paper.

Paper Into Kimonos

Westphal: Then, suddenly, this enlightenment came through, and I thought, "Oh, I could cut this all up in little pieces and then patch it back together again and make a kimono out of the 9 x 9 squares of paper." And this is how I began.

The first kimono I did--I love shibori technique, and one of the shibori techniques is to just dip cloth or paper into dye. So these first pieces of paper in the first kimono, I dipped into tea. So they had little brown edges, and then I looked at these things, and I had rubber stamps around, and I stamped, just with black ink, all sorts of things on top of it. The papers were tan and pink and blue because I had been using old paper from UC memos, the blue office memos, with the pink memos, and, you know, all the various things; the office would save me all this paper.

Nathan: Was there ink on these pieces of paper?

Westphal: It disappears when they go in the blender, because you blend it so long that the paper disintegrates. If you don't blend it this long you can have little messages at the end, these little flecks. But I blend it so it goes really back to pulp. The blue memos make the most beautiful blue paper with a little bit of grocery bags in it, you know, and a little of this and that. I was just doing this. This was when I was learning how to make paper, and I had all this stack. Then I suddenly cut them up into this module, and put them together in this kimono with all these little stamped things on it, and then I sewed it all together with gold thread on the sewing machine.

Well, this was a very elegant and very wonderful kimono, but I was making something to wear and it wasn't practical because it was too stiff and the paper was fragile. It was stiff and yet it was fragile because it was recycled, the fibers were short.

Then, gradually I changed the kind of pulp I was using. I did two more, I think, that was tan pulp, from this original paper, but I dipped those in blue dye, so the edges had blue indigo.

Nathan: So this was indigo that you were using?

Westphal: The second and third ones were indigo; not real indigo, indigo color.

Nathan: Now, when you dip them, do you hold them with your fingers?

Westphal: Yes, you just put a little edge in and it runs off. It's beautiful, you know. It runs along the edges. No two are alike because you dip different distances into the dye, you hold your hand in different ways, so each one, although it's all the same shade, it all has a different little blue pattern around the edge. And then I continued stamping these. Some of them, you know, were post office type stamps or office stamps. First Class Mail, Do Not Fold--

Nathan: Oh, I had assumed they would be these wonderful Indian stamps.

Westphal: No, no. These were just little For Deposit Only, all those, that little rotating thing and date stamps. I had a few other things around, then later on I borrowed a whole bunch of other stamps from Alice Erb at the Tail of the Yak that she was selling at one time. I hadn't bought them, and now she wasn't selling them but she had some left over. She wouldn't sell them to me, but she let me borrow them. So I used those for one or two kimonos.

And on these first kimonos I then looked around at what I had upstairs, and I had all these heat transfers which were left from the Egyptian quilts, and I always have piles of everything made, and so there were some of these, so I found I could put these on the paper. At that time I was just taking a whole heat transfer and just plopping it over the patched area, and so it pulled and came off in different ways.

Then, as they evolved, I decided the next one I did I think was the first Monet garden one. And I used flower catalogue images that I cut out and had heat transfers made of the kind of flowers that were in Monet's garden. And I had heat transfers made from some slides I had taken in the garden, and I had a photograph of Monet that I had purchased in the garden because it was just a marvelous portrait and I couldn't resist it. So I put that in the copy machine. So then I had all these images. I decided that I didn't like all this breaking on the edges when I just plopped the heat transfer on, so I decided to cut the heat-transfer sheets in the same modules as the pieces of paper.

Nathan: Is there a problem with heat transfer on paper?

Westphal: No, there isn't a heat problem. The problem is getting it to the right temperature to release without burning your fingers or burning the paper. So this requires a little bit of experimentation. It's also easier when you're putting a heat transfer on, to do a small one rather than a large one. And so this was a very good solution because I could get very perfect images doing a piece approximately 2 x 4½ inches. But I had the problem that it was now a giant jigsaw puzzle, and I had all the pieces all over.

So since then I have evolved systems of keeping photographic images together with numbers and paper clips, and then it eventually gets laid out on the table, and at the point where I'm organizing the little pieces of paper for the kimono, one just hopes that you don't have a windstorm because the whole thing would go all over the place. [laughter] Until this whole shape is established, all the pieces of paper are lying loose on the table and I can manipulate as one would do with building blocks or anything like this. I can change things around until I get a visual, pleasing statement.

Nathan: Now, just to see if I'm with you: On the table, then, you have the back of the kimono?

Westphal: The back of the kimono.

Nathan: Then you have to do the front separately?

Westphal: The fronts are laid out separately, one on each side. Usually I do the sleeve separately because my table isn't that large. I use a table that is about 4 x 8 feet, and it just takes about the back and front of the kimono laid out. But I also make little sketches at this point that show me how many pieces a sleeve has. I'm working on a kimono right now, and each sleeve has 70 pieces in it. So I know it's seven down from the shoulder seam. So I can lay these things out in this way. And this is exactly the way I was doing the samurai thing: I was taking little pieces and putting them together.

Sewing Fabric, Sewing Paper

Westphal: When I was in my patchwork quilt period in the early 1960s, I again had the same size table, but I would lay out all the pieces of material on the table. I had the sewing machine down next to it, and then sewed one piece together right next to the other and laid it back in the organization. That was much more difficult because cloth has a tendency to move away much more than the paper.

Nathan: Move away from the needle?

Westphal: Move away from its position on the table. It took a much longer time. With the paper things I had devised a system. Before I sew them together on the sewing machine, I use a glue stick and I glue the edges where it is going to be stitched. So from the time I start laying it out until it is at some point where I start stitching it, is maybe just two days because I have this glue period in between. But when I was working on the patchwork quilt, it would go on for months until I had sewed all these little pieces together.

In that too, as I was working on these things I discovered that I could make areas of one-inch squares. I would sew strips of $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces of cloth together, then I would cut it in $1\frac{1}{2}$ the other direction, move it and sew it together, and I would get an area of one-inch squares. Well, I would do things with two-inch squares, one-inch squares, triangles, and various things, put them together in large units, and then I didn't have chaos all over.

Nathan: So you found that you could control the number of pieces, the hazards, so to speak.

Westphal: Yes. So then these kimonos have evolved. Then I was printing shibori pieces, tiny pieces of shibori cloth that I had done, onto the kimonos. I don't know, I think maybe in the last two years I have done 15 paper kimonos. Only one of them isn't a whole kimono. One is just a half, I think that's "Giverny No. 3," I think it's that number. I had the back done and it all seemed so right I decided, "Well, why not stop when you're ahead?" I had used all the paper, so it was just done as a wall piece. So for people who don't want to wear kimonos, should anybody ever get this thing, they can just hang the half on the wall. By the time I was doing this one I decided that the others were too flat.

Three Dimensions, Reality, and Images

Nathan: Too flat in what sense?

Westphal: They didn't have any three-dimensional quality other than that that was created by the visual elements of it, on top, but I wanted it to come out to be more sculptural. So on this "Giverny No. 3," the one that is a wall hanging, I pleated it.

Nathan: Is this paper that you're pleating?

Westphal: Yes. I just folded it, and then I put paper behind it, holding the fold out, so it is crinkled looking, and I hung tabs on it, which I crushed, so it has long streamers hanging on the back that are crushed and hang out. I like this whole idea of what I was doing, and so the last one I did, which is now in Asia, has tabs--all over the back and sleeves--that stick out and are little flanges that come out over things.

Nathan: Oh, is this in Japan?

Westphal: Yes, it's in the show the United States Information Service [USIS] sent to Japan. It's going to be gone two years. It starts in Japan and I think it ends in the Philippines. It's going to Indonesia and Thailand. It's all on wearable art, and I have two things in the exhibit. It's called "Art to Wear" and the American Craft Council and the USIS are sending this show around.

It's very funny. This is the second show of wearable art that include my paper kimonos that has gone to Japan in the last year. This is insane, you know. [laughter] Here it is going back to Japan. Of course the Japanese at one point in their history used paper for their kimonos, and it is still used in certain monasteries at a certain time of the year. The priests get paper from the paper village of Kurodani.

Nathan: Is that mulberry paper?

Westphal: Yes. And it's white. They go to Kurodani and get these sheets, and then it is sewed together into kimonos. They soften it by wrinkling it in their hands, and they wear it for a certain period of time, and then it is burned at the end of this time.

Well, when I read this little business about what the monks were doing, I thought, "Well, that's the solution for my paper." Instead of having this hard surface after it's all printed, then I crush it and crinkle it, and so it goes back to its much more fibrous, clothlike state, and it is soft, and it takes a different kind of shape and form. So all the new paper kimonos have had this rough treatment with the little strips of paper before I finally sew them together, so they're very soft. The first ones were very hard.

There's a real progression in what I'm doing. I'm working on one now. I thought when I finished that last one in January something, I was through but I'm back on paper kimonos. The edges

Westphal: have cloth on them because I found that the paper next to paper, where the sleeve and the body of the kimono meet, that is where it tears. And the first one or two, the paper was sewed to the paper, which seems fine to make a seam, but it was not strong enough. In trying them on, I found that the paper was ripping there. So then I devised a way that I would just sew a band of cloth on that point and sew the cloth together, and the cloth makes a soft joint and does something very distinctive for the shape and the form of the kimono.

Nathan: So the actual printing, or whatever you do to the surface of the paper, the dye, the heat transfer, whatever, is done while the paper is in this very smooth state?

Westphal: Well, it's in the smooth state when it is in the little 2 x 4 inch module. After it gets put together, very little gets done to the papers. The next to the last one I drew lines across with a silver marker. After the whole thing was put together I didn't quite like the blankness of it and I felt it needed a little more zip to it. Again this business of putting together and tearing down, adding things on it without a preconceived idea. It just needed a little something, and I like the idea of silver markers, so I put silver lines across it.

Nathan: When you were describing several of the kimonos that had flanges or strips hanging, is that a part of it when you're sewing?

Westphal: It's a part of it when I'm sewing. Sometimes. It works better if I can put these flanges in at the time I'm putting it together, and instead of just having one layer of paper, you have two layers of paper, but the top layer isn't sewed to the one next to it, and so there are free-hanging flanges.

Nathan: How long are these?

Westphal: They're the same size modules, the same thing.

Nathan: Oh, I see, it's just something that--

Westphal: That just comes out as a flap over the top. In the last one that is in Asia right now, Monet's picture is in the center, sort of to the center of the back, and then it has flaps over it, and if you lift the flaps you see that Monet is under this bower of gingkos.

Nathan: So the gingko leaves are the image.

Westphal: They were real ginkgo leaves. Last year when the ginkgo trees dropped their leaves--I'm a passionate lover of ginkgo trees--I went out early in the morning down on I guess it's Berkeley Way, where they have some ginkgo trees between Shattuck and Milvia, and went out there in the rain and collected a basket of ginkgo leaves. Then I bought them home and fastened them with two-sided Scotch tape onto my pieces of shibori cloth or other textiles, and I took them down to Berkeley Blue Print and we made heat transfers from real ginkgo leaves. So this kimono and the one I'm working on now are covered with real ginkgo leaves.

It's kind of fun to have the combination of the real object, reality, with a textile that you have made or another--I used some Japanese cloth under them--or various things like this to get an impact. You don't know exactly what you're looking at because here are real leaves and drawn leaves with it. I like this combination of photographic realism along with a painted surface. I could draw the whole thing but it doesn't have the real impact and punch as when you put a photographic image in place of it. You suddenly look at this thing in a different way. It creates a different dimension, a different space for what you're doing.

Nathan: When you were talking a little earlier about the samurai vestments, it sounded as though you took what you had constructed and then you had a heat transfer made of it, so you had both the original and the image of the same thing.

Westphal: Yes. That's right. And the heat transfer became the undervest, which is quilted and decorated. Then I sewed on these little lock washers, because they became like little metal stars, which was exactly the same pattern that was used other places in the garment. So you see the heat transfer on it, which becomes what we call surface design, and the real, actual structured thing are together. I like all this combination of three-dimensional things and flat things put together in the same way the real ginkgo leaves put a flat painted pattern.

Balance: Kitsch and Art

Westphal: In that little sheet that I gave you on Egypt, I'm going to read a little thing that is here. It's something that was from a catalog, in Point of Contact, a statement I had to make about my work. When I found this in my file the other day, I dragged it out for you because I think this says exactly what I think I'm doing.

Westphal: [reading] "I feel I am perched on the top of a pyramid, maintaining a delicate balance between kitsch and art. The relationship between the unexpected is the challenge. I like creating an object which may seem worthless in time spent, materials used, and content. To me, the importance is the joy of doing. I love to cut, paste, color, stitch, and collect."

I think this is constantly what I'm doing, no matter what object I take to do. I'm interested in airport art, in tourist art, the kinds of things that are sold to tourists. I like to try and incorporate what I see around me when I travel and this real popular thing is in with my very intellectual concept. I have been a trained artist; I can't approach it with the naiveté of a folk artist any more because I have learned all the rules of what you put together and what you don't put together. But I still like the psychological impact of the kitsch and this very narrow boundary between what is good taste and bad taste. To me, that's the essence of where I'm trying to work, on that boundary. But somebody may look at it and say, "That's absolute kitsch," and yet you see the organization from it, and you realize it isn't because there is this trained sensitivity, viewpoint to what I'm doing. It's an intellectual exercise to combine the two.

Nathan: So you can keep a foot in both camps?

Westphal: I hope so.

Nathan: You are the art historian and you're still the artist and still using your plastic oranges.

Westphal: Yes, what happens around it. I don't know. This is what is the challenge to me, and you're not basically worried whether these things are going to be exhibited or whether they're going to be looked on with favor. I can't say that I can completely ignore this because I have an ego too, and I love to be appreciated, and I love to have people look at the work, I like to show it to them, but it doesn't dampen my spirits too much if they don't like it. Most people, of course, aren't impolite enough to say, "I can't stand it," but that's sort of the way it is.

As you came in I said that I was sort of pressured, that somehow I had accepted invitations to exhibit things which I had not produced. I don't like to work that way. I don't like to work on speculation. I like to show what I have done, but not until it is done. I don't like this idea of doing something just for a show. I had certain reservations about this fiber arts project because what was going to come out was going to be publicized, and I didn't know that anything would come out. But that was a risk

Westphal: you had to take. And I guess one has to take that risk. But I really prefer, after I have enough stuff that I want to show, then I would like to have a show. But that isn't the way the gallery scene works. They're so booked years in advance.

Nathan: Is this fiber arts project a new thing?

Westphal: That magazine thing should be out soon.

Nathan: The one with the samurai?

Westphal: The samurai. And it's well documented. I don't know how much they're going to put in. There was a lot of documentation that went with it, photographs in process, and an outline of how I thought I was progressing. But I don't know what will be in the magazine.

Nathan: It'll be fascinating to see what comes out. Be sure to save a copy to go with this.

Westphal: Yes.

I don't know. I think we've finished probably that line of thought.

VI SMALL BOOKS AND COPYING MACHINES

Nathan: When I think of these little pieces of paper that you do with so much love and skill, you had mentioned something about liking to do small books that are pictorial?

The Sights of Egypt

Westphal: Yes. These are illustrative to a certain extent. The first ones, I think, were all involved with this "New Treasure for Tutankhamen." They were based on little drawings and crazy ideas I had about seeing the pyramids, the camel, taking a photograph of Ed riding a camel. So I did one about the importance of the sun and the camel and the pyramids. It has a few little words in it and it has drawings and it has photographs. They're all produced on this wonderful Xerox machine, the copying machine, the black and white one. It isn't only Xerox, it's IBM, Canon, Kodak, whatever is doing the best image the day I'm working on it. And as one doodles on things, in staff meetings at Davis I would take a stack of paper towels with me and draw with my pen on the paper towels. Now, here is where I'm using a rough paper.

Nathan: I was thinking: how blurry.

Westphal: It blots. When you hold your pen a little longer you get a blot. I just love drawing on paper towels. So I would take paper towels to use and do these little drawings. Well, then I put all these little drawings into the copying machine, and then I had them back on a smooth surface of paper, but I had the blot from the softness of the paper towel. And I would have these little stacks of drawings. Then I cut these up and would organize them with copying machine photographs from color slides, various things like this, and put them together into a simple little story. Very, very simple.

Westphal: One of the sights that I loved the best in Egypt was on the Nile. We got off the boat one day and went to a site called Kom Ombo; Kom Ombo is involved with the crocodile god. And here's this beautiful temple, with lovely carvings and wall decorations all of crocodiles.

Nathan: Is it well preserved?

Westphal: Yes, it's well preserved. And in one room there are mummified crocodiles all stacked up like firewood. So I did a little book on food. I don't know whether crocodiles were food. Bread is the source of life, and the Egyptian bread is the same shape as the sun. And then I had photographs I had taken of walls with the bread in bas-relief, and so I took the image of the bread. Then there were also all these wonderful bas-reliefs of ducks, and I had taken photographs of these, and so I combined my bread, my duck, and my crocodile, and this was all on food because at the time I was working with drawings. I was at the College of Agriculture and there were meetings going on about the importance of world food or something like this. And so the little book all turned out to be on food, and the duck or the goose eats the bread, and then the crocodile eats the goose. [laughter]

Nathan: A food chain.

The Vienna Guide book

Westphal: Then I did some other little books. I saw graffiti on the wall of a train underpass in Vienna, and I photographed this thing. This one was done on the color machine. I found that manipulating, doing things as I was photographing, I could change the color.

Nathan: Tell me again what you were saying?

Westphal: This is complicated because--I have to backtrack a little. When the color Xerox goes into action, it prints three colors. It goes yellow, turquoise blue, or magenta, and all the colors that the color machine produces are a combination of these three. Each one goes through in a cycle. So to print one photograph or one color plate from the color Xerox machine, the light scans the thing three times. Well, I found that working with the slide on the machine, if I would interrupt this passage of the light over the slide, I would get a blaze of color, I would get a change in the color.

Nathan: You'd lift the lid?

Westphal: When you're working with a slide, the slide is projected in the carousel projector onto the plate, the glass plate, and the machine is not closed at this time. So you can see the light going three times. If you pass your hand or a piece of paper through this thing, you get blazes of color on the slide. And so I could change the color without moving the dials, I could just change it manually as I was doing it, and get flashes of color through these things.

I had a whole series of photographs I had taken. I just had a camera, and I wasn't doing it for a book, I was just taking pictures as I was walking around. And then I found that I had a little progression, that I could do a little book telling you how to get from downtown Vienna to see this painted wall, which is just a graffiti of a head on the wall that some child had done. So I did a little outline of how to do this and I put this in the book, and then it shows various things, and when you come to a certain field of flowers, you turn right or turn around, and then you see the painted walls. And then I had this same image in all these different colors in this little book.

I'm trying to think what else. I did one of some friends wearing some jewelry, and all I showed was the middle part of Debra Rapaport and Dolph Gotelli wearing Debra's jewelry. I had photographed these, and then I did one where I changed the color by flashing the color. So all it is, is showing the middle part of them with the jewelry.

I did some very complicated ones where I took sections of quotations from writers, and then I would take a photograph and manipulate the photograph through movement or breaking down through generations of prints, an illustration from something else that would illustrate this point. It was usually a relationship between men and women, that sort of thing.

I'm trying to think what else. Oh, I did one on the fountains of Versailles, and part of it is drawings that I made from costume plates, just little sketch drawings, and then I combined these with the photographs of the gardens and the fountains and Marie Antoinette's house. That sort of thing.

I've done some on sort of the history of costume where I had really just taken drawings again and then colored them and combined them in strange ways and overlapped them, but they became almost like figures in playing cards, that sort of thing. I would cut backgrounds out of them, put patterns on dogs, and various things

Westphal: like this. They're just a tiny, little idea, and they're all bound together in the Japanese accordion style; so it can be one very long horizontal, then you can open it up and see the whole progression of the story as it moves along, or you can have it all folded together and go at it page by page.

"Things Japanese"

Westphal: I did some of these on Japan. Then we went to Japan the second time with Yoshiko Wada. We were going to be visiting artists throughout Japan, and of course in Japan it's very important to bring a little gift with you and give them a little gift. We didn't know exactly what to take along, so I decided that I would make a little book from drawings from the previous trip of the things that I had enjoyed about Japan. Some would be photographic and some would be my little drawings or situations in Japan. So I did this little book and it was called "Things Japanese" but it was written in Japanese. I got the travel agent to write down "Things Japanese" for me, and so with Xerox I could print this. I saw it as the Great Buddha of Kamakura, and it has people taking off their shoes to go into a shrine, and women roasting chestnuts and sweet potatoes, and all the things that I found absolutely fascinating about Japan.

Making and Binding Books

Westphal: I made these little books, and thought I would go absolutely crazy making about 30 little books and binding them together and trying to get ready to go to Japan, but here were these little 4 x 4 inch books.

Nathan: These were not on handmade paper.

Westphal: No, no, these were all on--handmade paper is very hard to use in a Xerox machine. The machine is very delicate, and if your paper isn't all in order your machine gets caught. So it doesn't work on handmade paper. One Xerox artist in the area, fiber artist, who uses Xerox, has found a place that will let her put handmade paper in. She wasn't ready to tell me where this was, and I wasn't ready to ask her. I thought that had to be her thing: if she found the location where they would let you put handmade paper, that was her secret. I can be happy using commercial paper.

Nathan: So you actually made 30 little books?

Westphal: Yes, yes. I have bound hundreds of books, it seems. When I first started out the editions of the little books were 20, and each book was marked like a print in the number of the copy and the edition. Well, after binding 20 books, this seemed ridiculous. Well, you do have 20 books. It was just the idea of it. It was fun doing something in multiples, but it got boring putting them together because this is not a particularly easy thing to get them to all fold up right, and I had to glue sheets together.

Then I reduced it to 10, and I think finally to five, and several I've done have only one copy, some have two, simply because it is too much trouble to bind them.

Nathan: I hope you have some that you can deposit in The Bancroft Library.

Westphal: Yes, yes, I have some.

They were very much fun to do. It was sort of an immediate thing. It's a cut-and-paste thing. I think that almost all the things I do have--maybe a sense of cynicism and maybe a sense of humor going through them, you know. The world can go on this way, but maybe it doesn't, it slips, you know, and then you make bread for people, eat the bread and then the crocodiles eat the duck.

VII EGYPT REVISITED

Westphal: Oh! I know where we are going.

Nathan: Cynicism and humor?

Westphal: Yes. Well, when I was doing this "New Treasure for Tutankhamen," the show that I gave you the little blurb from, there were quilts in it, there were dalmatics in it, and there were cushions in it, there were collages in it that were copying machine collages, there were scrolls, and I guess that's about it. This was all derived from the second trip to Egypt.

Nathan: This was in the seventies, was it?

Westphal: I guess so. It would probably be about 1976 or something like this that we went on this trip to Egypt. The first one we had been there was 11 years before, I think. And Cairo was very different the second time and seemed much more prosperous. We went over to the Egyptian Museum, which was right across the square from the Nile Hilton where we were staying. As we walked in, the whole center of this very dark and very dusty and disorganized museum was all filled with crates and boxes. They were packing the Tutankhamen treasure to send to the United States.

Tourists and Collages

Westphal: Well, as we progressed through Egypt, we were on the Nile cruise, and we visited Philae, which at that time had a cofferdam around it, and they were preparing to move it to a different site on the Nile. This is one of the temples that is being moved because of the water from the Aswan dam.

Westphal: Suddenly, as we were standing there watching them number all the rocks and moving it to a site they had built across the river, I thought, what a fantastic idea. You wouldn't have to have people going all the way down to Abu Simbel and running all around, you could have them move all the monuments of Egypt up in the desert near Giza where the pyramids are and make a large little railway that would run around this thing with seats in cars. The tourists, you know, could look out and just beyond this little train and get transported around to see all the splendors of Egypt without having to move out of the luxury of an elegant dining car or something like this.

This really captured my imagination, so when I came home I began working on this series of collage drawings that is involved with moving the treasures around, rearranging the treasure of Egypt. And they are various things. For example, whole series of mummies that would be moved into a nice, orderly arrangement somewhere, and then the tourists would be looking at them. The tourists were a photograph of Ed and me looking at the monuments, or other places where workmen are carrying the head of Ramses up stairs, and the tourists are there looking. It was on a little train with all the people sitting in it, which happened to be an old photograph of my family that was taken at some exposition somewhere. Maybe it was 1915, in San Francisco, where they were viewing things, and here were all these little people on this car. So I used that, and these little people going through looking at various sights.

Then I further elaborated this thing, that you could have the Olympic Games at this site. So I cut out of the newspaper a picture of Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau when he was doing some publicity stunt or something, where he was bouncing on a trampoline. And I Xeroxed him and had him bouncing on this trampoline in front of the pyramids. I would move contemporary things in with the Egyptian things. I had dogs catching frisbees in part of this Olympic Games series and things like this.

It was very much fun to do. The whole thing turned out to be, I think it's called "Twenty-seven Views of the Land of the Pharaohs," a takeoff from the Japanese. When I think about my work, I'm always doing a takeoff of somebody else's work from some other art historical period, mixing them together.

Quilts and Images

Westphal: Also, the quilts were involved with this. The tourists were in all of them, and it was related to things that tourists could take home from Egypt. I was making them for fun. These are one-of-a-kind things, you know, that take months to produce. It isn't really tourist art, but it was this sort of thing, the tourists looking and this garbled impression they get of art history when you go on a tour and you have all this input from guides all telling you little things. People never have it straight, they get it all mixed up together, and this is what I was putting down on these quilts. And they progressed.

Somewhere in this period of time I went to Hawaii, so I put Hawaiian imagery in with the Egyptian images. I began playing around with time and space and this sort of thing and moving it all together. So I think there were about seven quilts in that series, and then there was some wearable art in it, and then cushions. I think there were 14, 16 cushions; they were these little souvenir sort of things.

This is all done on this shiny panne velvet with disperse dye, heat transferred onto it, and it has photographic images plus drawn things. I'm very fond of the Egyptian drawings, and so I do these great huge drawings à la Egyptian wall painting of birds or Horus the Hawk or something like this, and put these on top of images. One quilt is involved with Osiris.

In the Cairo Museum they had an absolutely wonderful thing. I didn't know what this thing was. It was a large piece of wood shaped in the Osiris form. The back had all holes in it. Then there was another one next to it, and it all had dried grass all over it. Of course nothing in the Cairo Museum at that point was labeled, so I searched out the Egyptian guide that was with us and dragged her over to this and asked what this was.

Well, this is part of the ritualism of death in Egypt, and when, I suppose, a pharaoh died they would make a mark around the body in the shape of Osiris, and then this ground would be planted with grass, and when the grass sprouted the spirit from Osiris would be moving on. Marvelous. A marvelous thing. And they still have some of these things in the museum. It's a wonderful idea, and it's a beautiful visual thing; you can imagine this with the dried grass on it. There're so many wonderful things going on.

Nathan: So the Osiris image is drawn on--

Westphal: Mud.

Nathan: On mud. Now, how is it reproduced in the museum?

Westphal: It's the whole mud. The whole thing is in it. She just told me the tale of this thing. I don't know where these things came from. They were evidently found in one of the tombs, because all this stuff there was from the tombs, and this was preserved. This was all part of the ritual, and evidently the grass must have grown outside because you couldn't have the grass growing after it is in the tomb. You have to have the sunlight. But the dead grass is still there, even though it may be three thousand, four thousand years old.

Sketchbooks and Journals

Westphal: And this little thing in here is from my sketchbook, and this is from my sketchbook, various things like this. [showing materials]

Nathan: I see. When you travel, do you keep a sketchbook going?

Westphal: I always have little books and I write on them and draw pictures and paste things in, and I cut and paste and write. I wish I could be more systematic, that I could write every day, that I would do something every day in this sense, but I don't. It's very sporadic. It will be very dense for a period, and I will write pages, because I think I'm going to get back to it, and yet I never do. Sometimes two years after I get back I write what I think about this thing that occurred when I was in a certain place. My memory of going to Afghanistan or to Peru, some of these things I have written very much longer afterwards.

Going back, I think we talked earlier about how I didn't type. I certainly feel I have a desire to learn how to type. Because I was cleaning my drawers when I found this writing, and I thought it would be interesting to put these things together, the actual reality of what I wrote at the time and then insert what I thought two years, six years, 10 years afterwards. But, I mean, no one is interested in this. I have drawers full of things I've written that have gone nowhere.

Nathan: You're distilling, so what you write two years later may be just as "correct," as what you wrote that minute.

Westphal: That's right, and I have forgotten all the little difficulties of not being able to get the kind of food I wanted to eat and not being able to get a taxi or having an argument at the hotel about the room or something like this. The difficulties have all disappeared, and the real essence has remained. So this is very important. But why this idea suddenly that I want to learn to type, that I'm going to type all this, why do I want to make more paper? I have enough paper as it is.

Nathan: The journals and your impressions pulled together would be very nice to accompany this memoir. At least part of it.

Westphal: I couldn't do it. Just this business of suddenly thinking that I should learn how to type. But I have so much that keeps me busy all the time, I don't really need to type what I wrote.

You know, I think when we think of these things, it means that you are in perhaps a very unproductive period, an uncreative part of your life, and you are thinking, "What am I going to do to keep me busy?" But this passes very quickly, and I'm off on another something to be doing, and the stagnation point has elapsed and I no longer feel it's necessary to go back. And of course also if you only want to rewrite what you wrote in the past, it means you're not experiencing anything to write about right now.

Nathan: This is interesting because I understand you to say that for you creativity has to do with the making of art. Creativity is also literary?

Westphal: Oh yes, I wasn't meaning to say that. What I think I was trying to say was that I felt stopped in everything I was doing. I wasn't experiencing anything that I felt I wanted to record, in doing art or in writing about it. It was just a dead period that shouldn't have existed, and until I could get over it, something to push me on, I could only look back. But I don't believe in looking back; I believe in looking forward into what I'm going to do tomorrow.

Seeing New Possibilities

Nathan: Is everything that you've experienced incorporated in what you're doing?

Westphal: Oh, absolutely. I think very much that everything builds on something else. No art exists just for one person at one time. You build on all art that went before you, you build on all experience. If we're writing we're building on how other writers see things. Maybe not consciously, but we're influenced. I mean certainly after you have read any of Proust you realize it's perfectly all right to make a sentence that goes for three pages. [laughter] You don't have to have short sentences with a subject and a verb, as used to be taught when I went to school, that everything had to be terribly structured. It had to have these things, and then suddenly you move out and you read other writers and it isn't important to have a sentence with a subject and a verb, and maybe it isn't even important to have anything connected, it could be just a series of words. I mean, you read this once and you think, "Oh, this is a possibility," and you can incorporate it in your own work. This is if you're writing.

The same is true of art. You see what Rauschenberg does with putting a three-dimensional object on a flat canvas, and you suddenly think, "I can do that too." You know, it is a possibility. Not that you say, when you're doing it, "I am doing this because Rauschenberg did it." The barrier has been taken down, that a painting has to be a limited size. When I went to school, paintings had a top, a bottom, and two sides, and they were rectangular. Now paintings aren't rectangular and they're not on a flat surface. I mean they can have things sticking out of them and they can have irregular edges and they can be all bumps and lumps.

VIII SURFACES TO PAINT ON

Nathan: That's interesting, this notion of different shapes for paintings. Somewhere you said that you had become interested in ceramics and in making pots because you wanted to paint these shapes.

Westphal: Yes. I wanted a different surface to paint on. I think this is going on right now in what I'm doing. I was interested in doing wearable art because it was constantly moving and it changed shape and it changed the way you looked at it. Well, if you exhibit this you run up against the problem that nobody is really able to exhibit wearable art.

Nathan: Maybe you need an installation in which breezes are blown through it.

Westphal: Well, this is a possibility. And fashion shows aren't the right solution for me because I guess I have a block against sitting back and watching somebody else prance in these clothes, which is fine for some things but this isn't what I visualize for my things.

Nathan: How do you see people wearing your beautiful--

Expressive Qualities

Westphal: Well, I guess I don't see them wearing them. Very few things have ever sold because the prices I'm sure are high and they're not wash-and-wear, they're not utility. It's all part of this idea that I use materials for their sense of what I'm trying to say. I mean I would just as soon use a plastic bag, in fact I'd probably be happier using a plastic bag or a paper bag than I would a piece of silk. I'm using it for its expressive qualities, not for its worth, monetarily. I am also doing things that would never occur in fashion.

Westphal: Right now one of the last really wearable things I did has very sloping shoulders. The weight is at a different point, you know, it's wide at the bottom and narrow at the top. Well, contemporary fashion is wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. And if you're following the fashion trends then probably you can sell more wearable art, but for me the emphasis is on the "art," not the "wearable," although I like the idea that somebody can wear these things.

Displaying Wearable Art

Westphal: All these samurai works are vests, and you can really put them on and wear them. You'd have to take off the dog head probably, unless you want to wear a mask, because it does have a dog head attached. But when I first did these I realized that this was part of the fiber arts project, that this was going to be a traveling show. They can't cope with this display problem. All these places as it travels around, are going to have an installation problem. So I have to do something so that they just can take it out of its box and either hang it on the wall, which I didn't particularly like, or they are going to pick it up and put it down as a piece of sculpture. That's how they arrived at this sculptural form, and I'm fascinated with it now. I want them to go on this way.

A friend of mine, Jo Ann Stabb, who also does wearable art, did an absolutely wonderful thing with fish on it. It was in an exhibit and it was displayed so badly she couldn't stand it, and she said to me on the phone yesterday, "You were absolutely right. I'm going to do this from now on. I'm going to put mine on something so that they just have to either hang it on the wall or set it down somewhere because the other person doesn't know what to do with these things."

It is easy for a gallery to hang a painting or set a piece of sculpture on a sculpture stand, but when they get something that is different it just doesn't work, and they look terrible.

I don't like my things on fashion models. I like them on dummies or on just real people. But this sort of prancing around, and the skinny, elongated form that high fashion models have, this doesn't work for what I think I'm doing.

Nathan: It's interesting that the installation is an important part of having something seen.

Westphal: Absolutely. And it becomes very tricky in this wearable art thing because certain galleries or dealers that sell wearable art have a real image of what they are trying to put forth. For example, the things that are sold in Julie's gallery in New York, Julie Schaefer, tend to be very heavy, quite dark in color. Heavy I mean in weight. They're very thick, very elaborate in form, moving on top. You feel the person is sort of dwarfed by all this garment on top, and the body doesn't show through as a moving thing. It is almost an armor that these coats and vests and jackets become, and this is very much a stamp of, I think, probably Julie's taste. I don't know what it is. But what I see that comes from her gallery is this sort of thing.

For example, on the Pacific Coast it's all more soft and sensuous, influenced by Asia very much, lots of silks being used and the garments sort of flow. It may be just that in California you couldn't stand to wear one of these heavy garments, and maybe their cold weather makes them work. I don't know. It's an interesting phenomenon that occurs.

Expression vs. Merchandising

Westphal: It's a very tricky area because where do you draw the line between what you consider your expression, and merchandising the thing that you're doing to sell? I think although wearable art is very much written about right now, I think the emphasis is merchandising. I don't think it is art, and I think people are confused as to what they're doing. It's a funny area to be working in.

I was answering some questionnaires that somebody is doing on yet another article. I answered the questionnaire and I now have to write a little note on the bottom saying I feel very crotchety because I really don't think I should have answered the questionnaire because what I believe in isn't really reflected in her questions. Her questions are all merchandising and money oriented and how you're making a business of this thing. She shouldn't have sent the thing to me because I don't make a business of this. If this were a business, years ago I would have been bankrupt. [laughter] If somebody does two things a year, it does not pay for a color machine bill. For example, I had some things done this week which I will

Westphal: be through using by the end of the week probably, and the bill for that is going to be \$62. This is going to be a paper garment that will probably take me a month or two to make, and that gets ridiculous.

Nathan: I suppose it's fair to say that your rewards are other.

Westphal: Yes, yes. I certainly don't do it for the money. It's a joke when I read this questionnaire. I know I've fired back some of these to people who sent them out, and then I thought, "Oh, that isn't really very fair because then the other viewpoint doesn't get expressed." So I've been answering this thing.

Nathan: Questionnaires are kind of chancy.

Westphal: They're chancy because the question stabilizes and almost suggests the kind of answer they want, and if you're really being honest you don't have enough time to answer the question in depth. It's simpler to say yes or no and fire the thing back, and somehow that doesn't seem ideal. But we can't all write volumes constantly, and get them all to fit our ideal of what it should be.

Nathan: Although you do more writing and publishing than many artists.

Westphal: I write but I don't publish much. As I said, I was going through my drawers, preparatory to cleaning out things, and I find all these ideas that I wrote about, things that I wrote about and I'm interested in, and I thought I had a viewpoint but--I've sent some of them out to magazines. Now if I write anything I just put it away in the drawer, I don't send it out, because they come back. For a while I thought it was because I didn't write well or didn't speak well or that I wasn't articulating an idea. Now I think maybe it's just that, like with my art and everything else, I'm out of step, I'm going to a different drummer. I don't know. But that doesn't stop me from doing it. I still continue doing it.

Nathan: Yes, it must take strength, and the knowledge that maybe they'll catch up with you later on?

Westphal: No, it isn't that. It's just because if I start writing I really get involved with using the words and the joy of that, but then something else will break in and I'm off on another project, a paper kimono or another samurai or something like that.

Nathan: Just to go back a moment to see if I understand what you prefer. You prefer, when you show something, not to have to make something for the show, but to take what you have produced, sort of spontaneously?

Westphal: Show what I am doing now, but I am not working for an exhibit, but just to show what I've been doing in the last year or two years.

Nathan: And are there opportunities for that?

Westphal: Occasionally. My "New Treasure for Tutankhamen" show at Davis was very large. I think there was far too much in it, but it all had this central theme, and since I don't have too many opportunities to do it, it was there. A few people saw it; not many saw it. One part of it went to Athens, Georgia, to a gallery off campus.

Nathan: You were talking about this beautiful Egyptian show that was an invitation to show what you wanted to.

Westphal: The Design Department had a slot in the Memorial Union Gallery and I don't think they knew exactly what to do with their slot. I was retiring, so they offered it to me if I wanted to have a show there. So that was it. And now the samurai are going to be in Davis again in March.

And then one day I had all these dog drawings that I was doing, dog collages, whether dogs should wear kimonos and speak Japanese. I think it was the year after I retired, I didn't do any textiles, all I did was work on these collage drawings on this subject matter, for a whole year. Well, I guess there're 25 of them or something like this. I was terribly interested and very fascinated, but these have never been shown. I went into a gallery in San Francisco and I was sort of trying to get a little interest in having a show at this commercial gallery. I didn't think I was getting very far. I said I had these paper kimonos and I did these things and I thought that they would go together well. They were sort of thinking about this, but there was no, really, pickup on this thing at all.

We went out then to the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum to see a show, and when we got out there, in the course of looking at the things, the curator came up and asked me if I would like to have a show. Well, this didn't happen very often, so I said yes. At first I was going to use the Egyptian quilts, and then I looked at the space and I realized nobody was going to be able to see all those Egyptian quilts, the space wasn't right for them. So then I decided to expand the number of kimonos I had and do the kimonos.

Nathan: Are the quilts bedsize?

Westphal: Yes, they're bedsize. They're approximately 60 x 90 inches, twin bedsize. Not that all these quilts I've done are. The first ones I did I really did to use on beds as bedspreads, and not one has ever been on a bed, they've gone on walls.

Nathan: Egyptian quilts, somehow those terms don't particularly suggest each other.

Westphal: This is the combination of things that don't quite go together.

"Paper to Wear"

Nathan: It's a beautiful example. What happened about the Folk Art Museum show?

Westphal: So then I had the exhibit. I think it was called "Paper to Wear." There were the kimonos, and there were some paper hats I had done, and paper jewelry. The paper jewelry was successful in that these things sold. I'm sure it was because they were cheap. And when I think of the amount of time that I spent making the paper jewelry and rolling little tubes of colored paper and pulling paper shapes for flowers and putting them all together and stringing it. I'd spent, what, 80, 100 hours putting a small necklace together that when it sold I would get \$50. Talk about slave labor. It's good I wasn't trying to make money at this sort of situation, but people sort of responded to these and they bought some of them, and I guess one paper hat sold.

To a great extent it's always a business of being terribly impractical. I'm not interested in art lasting forever; I'm interested in the thing that is only a memory of something, and these things will disintegrate fast, I'm sure. I mean these are paper that will turn back to pulp if it rains. It was fun doing them as an expression, but definitely not wash-and-wear.

Nathan: You made more kimonos for that particular show?

Westphal: I made some more kimonos for that show, and this captured people's imagination. They've been in many shows, two or three at a time, out in places, and one of them has been purchased in Washington, D.C., for a collection. And now a gallery in Portland just asked me to show the paper kimonos up there, and so that's what I'm doing. When I show like this I like to do one new thing that hasn't been in the last show. So I'm doing another one to go with that group. And

Westphal: whether it's a paper kimono or a quilt or a painting, it's all the same thing, or one of these collages of moving the monuments around. They're all working with the same things, it's just the outward form that becomes a little different.

Nathan: When you send these paper kimonos to Portland, do you go there too?

Westphal: I'm going to be there to jury a show, but I will be there a few days after the show, and so I will not be there for the opening or to help with the installation I specified. However, this show may not work. They talked to me a long time on the telephone, but they haven't gotten around to writing me a letter as yet. I'm still waiting for the letter, and I guess I'm going to just have to say, "Come on, now, who's paying for what?" [laughing] "Are you paying the shipping?" This may not come off.

Nathan: If there's a brochure of the show, does the gallery prepare that and pay for it?

Westphal: I wish so, but there isn't a brochure. Very, very seldom is there any catalogue or brochure or anything that goes with it. The "New Treasure for Tutankhamen" brochure occurred because I like to put things together this way and I had the machine facilities to do it. So we just printed a couple of hundred that were there in the gallery at Davis if anybody wanted to take it. I had at one point almost 100 left. So there was not much interest.

Nathan: When you specified that you would not be involved in installation, is an artist often asked to do that work?

Westphal: I didn't specify that I wouldn't. I would rather install it myself. I installed the one at the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum. I like to do that sort of thing. I enjoy installing exhibits of my own work or other people's work. I love putting things in cases and hanging things on walls and changing them around and trying to see how they work best. I like doing that. But I just didn't even want to particularly stay overnight in Portland. I don't like Portland very well, I guess. At that point I didn't feel I wanted to be away. I had just gotten back from Europe and I was just getting back to what I thought I was doing again.

IX CONTINUITY, IDEAS, MATERIALS

Westphal: Every time you go away it interrupts your whole train of what you're doing, and it's very hard to get over the period of not working. Usually just when I go I'm in the middle of something that is really hot, and I break into it, I can't get back. That's what's happened on the samurai things, I can't get back to where I was.

Nathan: Writing yourself notes doesn't--

Westphal: It doesn't work. I mean I forget things and I write little notes and I look back, "Oh, I wrote these things. Well, maybe that's the solution," but it isn't working because it has to be a more continuous thing.

Nathan: It's the process again?

Westphal: Yes. I think now I'm over this samurai slump that has been going on since--when we got back from Europe I couldn't get back to it. I tried all sorts of ways to get going and I've rejected every little attempt. I look at it and it isn't right. Hopefully now I'm on the track again, but I don't know.

Nathan: The element of judgment is intriguing. You were saying earlier that when you keep building up and tearing down, it's hard to know when to stop. And then you are able to look at your work and say, "Well, I'm not on track yet." This judgment must be a subtle one.

Collections of Work, and Limits of Space

Westphal: Well, it's subtle, and it's something I think you get more experienced in as you work with this longer and longer and longer, and I've worked on this same problem for so long.

I find a certain difficulty in not having a big enough space that I could just leave everything out. I would like to get all the samurai up and have them all around, but, after all, I have to consider the other people who are living here, and the dogs.

And, as you mentioned, as you came in, you keep seeing more and more of Ed's baskets. Well, these seem to be a group that he's working on, and it's almost essential to see these things as you're progressing so you know how you're going to change when you do your next one and how it's going to build up. It's hard to do just an isolated thing. Everybody is faced with space limitations. You know, we can't all have a big warehouse or a gallery where you can just put all your work around and just sit in the middle, like Picasso did, and then when that house is filled you move to another and fill that one.

When we were in Los Angeles we saw a collection of art by Picasso. It's not the major things, it's just that somebody collected this stuff; one man just bought these things and he bought a whole variety of things. These were little sculptures and little pieces of jewelry that Picasso had done, and some drawings, and linoleum print, and big sculpture, and all sorts of things. One of the most fascinating things was a bronze model of Picasso's hand. They're very small hands, his hands were no bigger than mine, and here's this bronze hand in the case. There was a little note with it that, when he was working at Vallauris, he had taken his hand and pushed it into a lump of clay and then they cast this thing. Well, it's absolutely fantastic to see this hand cast in bronze. It's marvelous, and here it is in this collection.

And some little drawings of bullfights, on little tiny scraps of paper, 3 x 4 inches, obviously from a notepad that he was drawing on. They had mounted all these things in a frame and all these fluttery little pieces of paper with little sketches, and a little piece of sculpture that he had done out of some toys on the beach and various things like this. You saw the whole invention of the man's mind, of what he was doing, of how he was playing around with materials, how everything around him could be transformed into his vision.

Westphal: Amid all these things they had photographs that were taken of him in the studio with the objects around him. He had the most wonderful clutter in his studio because he didn't have anything put away tight in cupboards or on shelves. It was just all stacked around the walls. He was eating in the middle of it and the dog was crawling up to his lap to get some food or something like that, and the kids were playing around. Well, it was a total, wonderful environment, and I guess one wishes you could have that sort of space that you could just keep doing things and move into the next space when that space was filled. But that doesn't work very well. A fantasy I would love to have, you know, that you could just have it all around you, and when one room got filled you could move to the next one.

Nathan: And trace your development?

Westphal: Well, you know, you could walk back then. Actually, without unpacking them you could just go back in time and see what you were doing three years ago without having to get it out of the box, and you'd be terribly surprised because you'd forgotten you'd done it.

Nathan: I was thinking of the sequence of decisions that you have to keep making all the time. There're all these branches. You follow this branch, but you have no idea what that might lead to?

Westphal: One always has many more ideas of possibilities of what you could do than you can ever do, and you have to make a decision which path you're following. It may be the wrong path. You never know, because you can't backtrack to that point in time and see if you really followed the right path. And it is, I suppose, one of the major things that every artist is faced with. Maybe every person is faced with this in his whole life. It can't just be artists, there's no one way. You don't know what all these branches may lead to.

Seeing the World

Nathan: When you spoke about what travel has meant to you in the way it furnishes your mind, is there a tradeoff? It is also an interruption to the flow of what you were developing at home?

Westphal: Yes, there is this, but I couldn't conceive of a time when I couldn't go and travel and see what is going on in another part of the world, how people are living. I know it's going to happen,

Westphal: because I'm 65 now, and eventually, if I keep on living, it's going to mean that I'm not going to be able to go hooting off to another part of the world. And also, the way the world is going these days it isn't safe now. India is off the list, you know. As far as I was concerned it was off the list before. I've been to India twice, and the last time I picked up some bug and had to come home. I just feel that I can't cope with the bugs that are existing in India.

But now I think of my friend Yoshiko Wada over there, taking a tour of people, and I can't find the list of where they will possibly be at this time, possibly New Delhi. I think this is terrible because this disorder is influencing what these people are going to see. It may be endangering their lives, it certainly is damaging their psyche, they're going to be scared silly to be in a terrorist situation, which it is. I'm glad I got to Iran and Afghanistan while it was still possible. It wouldn't be possible now. You know, the way things are going, little areas of our world are all being cut off, that we no longer have access to. Of course with political decisions that are made in the United States, Americans are not looked on with much friendship right now, and you feel this, and it's unfortunate that one is so restricted.

I don't mean going to these places and looking at these things as one goes to the zoo and looks at the animals, I think it's beyond that. I mean really trying to understand in going to Iran the psyche of the people who built these marvelous mosques and what was going on, and then the quiet and the contemplation that one moment of time had passed. There would be this wonderful monument, all glistening with patterns all over it and tremendously high ceilings and nothing in it, you know.

This is a complete reversal to going into San Marco in Venice, which is all full. It's dark and it's filled with a multitude of objects and glitter and tiles on the wall, but it's dark and there's incense and there is a density of pattern on the inside. It isn't this quality of things being kind of empty and looking up into these patterns and seeing them on the ceiling.

The wonderful thing of going to Japan and walking through the Nijo Palace, which I would love to do again--I would like to do that tomorrow, walk through the Nijo Palace in Kyoto and hear the floors creak and look at the paper walls that have all been repaired. Well, this is fascinating to me, all these paper sliding panels, when they get a hole in them they cut a little piece of paper in the shape of a plum blossom and they put it over the tear. So when you're inside you can see all these little plum blossoms showing.

Nathan: I thought they were part of the design. It's actually a repair?

Westphal: It's a repair, you see, and it occurred as a blossom. But, you know, it's a lovely idea.

It isn't just using these countries as a museum. It's fun to walk down the streets and see what the people are wearing and what they're doing. I love to go to markets all over the world, you know, to see what they're buying and how they're buying it. I can remember the wonderful exchange in a market in Shiraz, in Iran. I had seen some absolutely marvelous skirts on some traveling women that had come into the markets in Shiraz. Then I found them in the market, and so I was buying one, and making a selection. Some of these women saw this and they came over to help me make the selection, and then they got absolutely fascinated with the jewelry I had on, so they looked at all the things I was wearing.

Nathan: What were you wearing?

Westphal: I think probably just rings and a necklace of some sort and a wristwatch. They looked us over, and then they showed me their jewelry. And this was a beautiful exchange, you know. We didn't have a common language, we just looked and smiled and indicated. They were pleased that I had picked the right-colored skirt, you know, and they were holding it up and showing me what kind of a belt to wear with it, and all this sort of thing, just in the market.

Well, I feel very much at one with these people because of this, and it wasn't just going and looking at them and seeing what the people are doing: I was all a part of it. This is what I like about travel. I love to go to the temple sales in Japan and see what they're buying and they're watching what I'm buying, and they're seeing whether I'm getting a good price. I'm not sure I am getting the right price. It is this whole exchange, not with language, because this barrier does exist, but it is that I'm appreciating this and so are they.

The Grid in the Brain

Nathan: There's a sympathy, an understanding?

Westphal: Yes.

Westphal: Well, this is one of the reasons why it's important for me to travel, and when I come back I use these things in what I produce. I may see a textile in Japan, and then I reproduce that, either actually trying the technique, or doing a drawing of it, or drawing a dog speaking Japanese in a kimono on a piece of paper, or using a photograph I took in combination with these things. I feel for me this has made my work more personal.

It has taken me out of the realm of the rectangle that exists in your brain. When nothing else comes in, you always have this structure and you can always do a grid or do something that is on horizontal and vertical lines. But I am interested in the thing going farther and recording those things that I perceive about the physical world in a reality for me.

Nathan: This ability to be sympathetic to another culture may explain why you can be so bold as to send kimonos to Japan, and they are acceptable.

Westphal: Yes.

Nathan: I think that speaks a great deal for your understanding.

Westphal: It's fun to be in this place so that I don't feel that as an artist I am existing just in 1980, in Berkeley, California. I feel that I can find roots anywhere in world. Anything that I can see and appreciate, that can be my work too. It doesn't have to be just a United States of America look.

Nathan: You were saying you do not always decide ahead of time to say yes or no to choices and new ideas?

Westphal: Yes. To say yes or no. I think if we edit too much what we are going to accept or what we are going to express, we may lose the vitality and what the real message is, because I believe very much that these things just drift in, that I don't dig them out, that I am just a receiving set for what comes through. I know lots of people don't agree with this, but I like to be receptive to these things that come in and, you know, I can say yes, I can say no, I can accept them, I can reject them.

I think that this works in everything you do. You're constantly making choices, and for every object you produce you have thought of 15 million solutions and you have to take the one, make a decision, but you may have taken the wrong one. I don't think you can worry about that; next time you may take another path and you may win on that one, but maybe you may not. But you can't be

Westphal: 100 percent sure, and maybe that is part of the joy of doing it. It's a gamble; you never know whether you're going to win or whether you're going to lose on this thing, but you have to recognize that with every success there are also some failures.

Nathan: That's very interesting.

The Good Story, Art, and Environment

Nathan: When you were speaking about reaching students or reaching, let's say, the people who were at the conference in Vienna, it seemed that some people are ready to listen and some are not. Are there individuals who have influenced you that you can recall particularly?

Westphal: Well, no, I don't think I can say this because I am afraid that almost everything influences me. I mean I'm constantly listening to things. What we are doing now is influencing me. I feel, "God! I've got a captive audience--you're sitting or listening, you're responding." And this leads me on to say things I would probably never say because I am getting a reaction.

When I was teaching textile history I would pick out a student in the group and I would tell a story to them and watch their facial expressions. Of course, as you do this, you find out which ones are with you and which ones aren't, and the ones that are sleeping you just allow to sleep and try not to kick over the wastebasket because it disturbs their slumber. But you find somebody that is responsive and you tell them this story, and you embroider this thing, you make it a good story, and you keep them interested so that they are ready to ask you a question.

And in these lecture classes I thought I was successful, because I had a very large audience. In these textile history classes I would have over 100, sometimes 200, and these weren't all design majors who had to take something, they were just coming in and taking it. I had people in the community who would just come in and listen to these and look at the slides.

Believe me, I didn't give them historical data. I wouldn't remember the dates or that sort of thing, but I would try and tell them what made something terribly exciting to me, why I responded to it, and that's what I was trying to do in that little Chinese embroidery book.⁴ I wasn't trying to tell all the dates and all

⁴Dragons and Other Creatures

Westphal: the techniques and all that stuff. I would say, "Look at this thing, use your imagination, see what it tells you, and see what you know about the people who did it," so that the person who did it is as important as the object. If I would be talking about Tunisian embroideries or head cloths or tie-dyes or something, I would show them what Tunis looked like, what Tunisia looked like, what the people looked like.

Constantly, as I was traveling, I was always taking my camera with me and photographing the environment, because I think you can't separate art from the environment, and everything that people are surrounded by enters into their textile art. Maybe not consciously, but it moves in on these mysterious little air waves that come through and drift and bring in little pieces of what it is. It may be the religion, it may be the materials they have to work with, it may be their relationship to the village, but it's all expressed in this piece of textile.

I'm using Tunis as an example. I went into the markets. The souk there has old stuff and it has new stuff, and I found a shop that had evidently purchased a large collection of textiles from some Berber village that needed money. So I ended up with a whole suitcase of Berber head cloths and other little objects, and carted these all back and showed them to the students and told them how they were done technically.

Then I would demonstrate. Well, I know I had people in the textile class that didn't know what a loom looked like and didn't know that there was a certain principle of one thread going up and one thread going down and another one passing in between.

So I would take them into a studio where the loom was and we would look at the loom and see how the loom worked. Or when I was talking about these woven head cloths that are then dyed with the tie-dye method, I would take all my dyes into the lecture hall and I would dye textiles in front of them, showing them how it was done, not the how to do it, but to have an appreciation of what the person who made it went through. When I showed the shibori textiles I would knot little shibori knots for a kaneko on this fabric so they would have a comprehension of the time it took to produce a kaneko kimono.

I think these are very important because I think that also you realize that the time in producing these things is not important. I mean fast time, Western time, so that it's produced instantly, like pushing a button on the Xerox machine. It took endless hours of patience and you developed a kind of meditation as you were doing

Westphal: these things, it moved to a different time quality of how life moved. I would buy little religious symbols that I could find around and bring these in and show them how important it was for somebody who had been to Mecca or one of the holy cities to have this little thread-covered star with them. [bringing out examples]

Nathan: Oh yes, I see.

Westphal: I think those are from Iran. Then you made the little pilgrimage to Mecca. No, these aren't. These are Kairouan, in Tunisia. You would buy one of these stars to take home and they were sold around the mosque in Kairouan. These are beautiful fiber-art things, but they also have a religious significance. There's always this overlapping of your philosophical, your religious beliefs and what you do. They aren't divided; they're all one, and they're all related to the kind of materials that are available for you to use.

The people in Africa who make mud huts and put sculptural designs on them with their hands, they are making a beautiful, functional object for themselves to live in, they're decorating it on the outside, they're using materials they have available, the mud, and they push it together and it is covered with their religious symbols. Well, it's all tied together, and we look at it and say, "That's a great artistic thing."

The same thing is true of Christian churches. San Marco, in Venice, for example, is a wonderful, eclectic example. It's got everything in it. It has a religious tie-together, but it is using the materials and the storytelling quality of various peoples all put together. You see Jewish symbolism, and Christian symbolism, you see Moorish symbolism, and it's all there together and it's a working whole.

The Santa Sofia in Istanbul. It very definitely has gone through all these religious identifications, changing radically from one to the other. Of course now it is dead because it's only a museum, it's only a national landmark for Turkey, and it has, I think, lost its vitality. You go, almost next door, into the Blue Mosque that is still being used, where there is a true religious feeling, it isn't just a museum that tourists walk through, and here are people. There's something mystical going on, this blueness, this tile, the rugs, the lamps, the light through the stained glass windows and all of these dark, prostrate forms. This creates a whole environment and it tells you something about the rugs that are on the floor, the kinds of patterns, the absence of people on the walls, and the flowers, birds, and geometric forms, whether

Westphal: it's from the Koran, on the decoration. This is all telling us something about why the art looks like it does, why the textile, why the rug looks as it does.

Nathan: That's very clear and eloquent.

Ways of Seeing, and Reorganizing Space

Nathan: There must be a connection between fiber art and painting because you're both a painter and a fiber artist, and I'm fascinated by the way the ideas flow from one to the other.

Westphal: Well, I think very much I approach working with fiber in the same way I approached work when I was a painter; I just think that way. I do not plan and go through a thing as if I were building a house; it isn't that sort of a process. It is very much a visual reaction to what is there, and I do something else. I'm a great cutter-up. I cut things up and reorganize. This is very apparent because right now what am I doing? I'm taking many photographs and I'm organizing them into one, so it becomes a collage. I'm doing it right now with color film in the camera.

Nathan: Is this related to your travels?

Westphal: It's related to my travels, but it's related to the way I see things. I do this when I travel because I have this great urge to keep doing things all the time, and it's easier to carry a camera and film with you, and now with the print film I can get them printed in an hour almost anywhere in the world. So I can see immediately what I'm getting, and in the hotel room I can organize my prints into a larger unit.

I'm doing exactly the same thing with this photograph that I do when I print a textile: I'm putting little pieces together to create a whole which is not particularly related to what I am photographing. If I photograph, I am photographing something in the way my eyes move around the room and take in many small details and put them all together to create a spatial complex. I'm talking about the space: what it looks like above, underneath me, all around, and where my eye focuses. And new shapes result that are not in the original object. If I just put a wide-angle lens on my camera and photographed it, the spatial relationship and what would become important would be very different. I pick out things and these are the important things.

Westphal: I was doing, during the summer, the interiors and exteriors of baroque palaces. And now I'm sorry that there aren't any baroque palaces in Berkeley. [laughter] Because I have to continue this, but what am I going to do? Right now I'm fixating on a neighbor's deodar tree. When I walk underneath this tree it becomes like a baroque palace. I have to figure out when the light is best because I want to go out and photograph this deodar tree from the needles underneath it to the very top of the branches that I can see over my head, and all the little birds' nests and various things that are in this tree. It's an idea; it hasn't started to work yet.

Nathan: I see. Could we talk about what there is about the baroque that attracts you?

Westphal: I recently discovered the baroque, I think, probably in 1980 when I went to Vienna and was surrounded with baroque palaces and churches for two weeks. I didn't particularly like it, it didn't appeal to me, up until this time. I must have been ripe to accept it at that point in my appreciation of art because now I find it fascinating. I had seen it as early as 1943 when I was in Mexico for three months and saw the very elaborate baroque churches down there. But I sort of rejected those things. I was off in a different era. I was interested in other things.

I don't know. Right now I have all this tremendous interest in other types of art. I, at one time, was just nuts on classical art; I just thought this was the greatest. Then we went through the Egyptian, Japanese, all these things where I really tried to immerse myself not only in the architectural culture but what went on in these buildings.

For example, I think my feeling about what is in Kyoto, is so influenced by Lady Murasaki's Tale of Genji that I see what the court life was when I look at the interior of the room. I'm fascinated by all sorts of things in Japanese architecture, for example, in the Nijo Palace in Kyoto the fact that as you walk across the floors all the little boards squeak.

Sound as a Part of Visual Art

Nathan: The nightingale floors?

Westphal: The nightingale floors. I realize, you know, that I read about this in the Tale of Genji, but here I experienced it and it makes it much more real, and I realize that sound is a part of art too.

Westphal: A sound is a part of fiber art, let's put it this way. It isn't just this thing sitting out there, but you can participate in this thing. For example, when wind blows through a textile that is made of plastic, you get a slight rattling sound. This is very important in your whole way of experiencing a piece of fiber art. You experience it on many different levels. You experience it probably first visually and then maybe you touch it, if you're so lucky as to be in a situation where you can touch it. Touching doesn't hurt things, but you realize if you're going to keep things forever as a historical thing then you can't let the human hand touch them. But I'm not sure that that's the function of art of any kind to be so divorced from people that they can't experience it by touching it.

And then, if you are with this object long enough you realize that atmospheric conditions change the sound it makes. We know acoustical materials change the sound or the volume. I'm sure everybody has had the experience of going into a restaurant that is so noisy you can hardly stand it. And then if you go into a restaurant that has acoustical material, that has textiles around, the sound is muffled, it's softer. We do this to our houses. If they get too noisy we begin hanging drapes and putting things on the walls.

And then we go even further. You go to the temperature control of these things. In medieval castles they were so cold and drafty that tapestries then covered the walls; tapestries became a climate control as well as a decorative feature. The wind was kept out, you were a little warmer, and you could look at all these woven people surrounding you.

Car Wash as Fiber Art

Nathan: You mentioned dancers wearing ecclesiastical garments, and the way one dancer had turned the garment around so that something intended to hang front and back came out over the shoulders. Does the way people personally manipulate the artwork change it?

Westphal: I think a good example of fiber art is a car wash.

Nathan: Oh yes.

Westphal: This is a purely technical thing. It isn't intended to be fiber art, but it is related to what happens in our galleries, and this is something that we move through. We move through in our little sealed capsule and we experience the sound of the water, the whishing of the soapsuds, all those stringy mops that come over us, and then the flapping things that wipe the suds off the car, and finally the air. It is like walking through a piece of fiber art.

There was an exhibit in New York, at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, oh, maybe 10 years ago. Paul Smith set up a whole battery of--I think they were--plastic strips that hung down. (It's longer than 10 years, it's probably 15.) You walked through this as you went into the room. Some people entering the gallery, I saw edging around to go the other way; they weren't going to walk through this thing. To a certain extent I guess it would be dangerous because I think the floor went up and down as you walked. [laughter] But it was a real business of changing your perspective of things as you moved through this thing. I don't know whether that was a piece of art or whether it was a piece of museum display. I have no idea. I can't remember. I just happened to think of it now in relationship to this car wash.

Look at Lenore Tawney's fiber art, the rain clouds and various things that are just a series of strings hanging from the ceiling. The one that was at Fiberworks several years ago had a pink flower in the very center and it was all pink strings coming down, and you were supposed to walk through this and sort of the thing would swing. That links it to the car wash.

But, for example, the car wash up at the Standard station by the Nut Tree used to have just gray-colored pieces of fiber that hung down as you went through. I used to have my car washed there all the time. When I went to Davis, I would stop and get gas and then I would get my car washed on the way home. My car is very dirty now--I don't go to Davis any more--and there isn't a good car wash around here.

About a month ago I went to Davis and on the way up I stopped and had my car washed. Well, a new and miraculous thing has happened to the car wash: color has been added. And now when you go through the car wash it's red, white, and blue stripes. It is just marvelous. It's better than it was before. But I don't think the person who invented car washes is considered a textile artist, but maybe he is. Or she. I don't know.

Nathan: Maybe so.

Baroque Interiors, Old Mirrors, and Space

Nathan: Can I backtrack just a bit? You began to talk about your ability to enjoy the baroque. Do you differentiate, let's say, between baroque and rococo? Or doesn't that concern you?

Westphal: I'm not that much of a purist. I think probably much of the architecture in Vienna is rococo from the way the s-curve moves in it. But it is just a whole period of these curvilinear forms and the excesses of decoration on things, the whole idea of little gilt curving lines crossing ceilings and around mirrors.

I'm interested in what mirrors do, and old mirrors particularly. You look into a baroque interior and it has mirrored walls on one side, and the mirrored walls reflect over to the windows and they bring the foliage from outside inside, reflecting into the mirror. So there is a confusion of space, between the outside and the inside, and you get a reflected pattern. Or if you have people moving through one of these rooms with the mirrors, you have twice as many people. You have this great confusion of images, which breaks up all the space. It doesn't have the formality of the basic plan.

Well, last summer we went to the Bauhaus Archives in West Berlin, and you have a completely different sensation of form in a Bauhaus building than you do in a baroque building. They are as far apart probably as you can imagine, with the stark, vertical and horizontal planes of the building, the white windows that are covered that you don't see out of; the outside doesn't come inside. Everything is controlled.

Nathan: This is the Bauhaus style?

Westphal: Yes. It's all very linear, although it does have curved forms that are all a very controlled curve form; it only goes in one direction, it doesn't backtrack on itself. As far as I can remember, I can't think of any mirrors at all. The only thing that would be reflective surfaces would be glass cases or glass over objects in the archives themselves.

But in a baroque building you have these mirrors that now are stained by time--they have dark spots in them--and instead of it being one sheet of mirror, it's made up of many sections. So this grid line that crosses the mirrored section does something very

Westphal: strange because all the mirrors aren't the same reflective quality, and it all begins to tip, and it becomes a little bit like a cubist painting. It has all these little facets of very subtle changes in space.

And then in combination with this of having the exterior, the foliage, coming in the room on the mirror, or reflecting the gold tracery from the ceiling or the other wall, you get a very complex and very moving surface.

I don't know. I just suspect that it wasn't seen when it was done in the way that I see it now because I have experienced cubist painting and what has happened. I think none of us can ignore all the rest of the things that have gone before us in art. In some subtle way we see everything a little differently.

If one would have no vision of any of these things, you wouldn't see it. If you wouldn't have seen a cubist painting you wouldn't see this relationship, but we now have seen cubist paintings. We have seen what the cubists have done and how they interpreted space. So we look at something and we say, "It is reminiscent of this."

For example, we can see people going up and down an escalator, and you think, well, an escalator is sort of an outgrowth of Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase." But if we hadn't seen Marcel Duchamp's painting, we wouldn't have that relationship when we looked at an escalator today. I don't think so. I don't know. I mean I get off on these little tangents and tracks of thinking.

Changing the Patterns of Light

Nathan: This is exciting. One other element of this mirrors milieu you're speaking of, is that they all seem to be hung with enormous chandeliers. What would this do to the light?

Westphal: Well, this is it. I think the light is the important thing, that it is changing the light pattern. When I go into a room in a baroque palace, if I just try and photograph straight, I can't photograph; there isn't enough light for my film. But if it's on the questionable side--you know, that I think maybe it's possible--if I turn around and photograph into the mirror, the mirror has collected all the light and there's enough; I get a good image.

Westphal: I did this first a year ago in Potsdam, in Sans Souci palace. I discovered I could take these pictures, and then I looked at my results and I saw I was capturing all this cubism. Two images of the same marble head looking at each other in relationship to people. All this became very fascinating. So this year when we went back to Potsdam, I photographed again there and I did one of these things where I photographed all around the room and the ceiling, but I don't think it is as successful because there were so many people in the room.

Although I like people in it, I don't want just backs of heads and shoulders. I needed a little space, and so my tendency was to photograph over their heads. Well, I don't get the real feeling of this volume because I only have the top half of it. I get heads in the bottom, but I don't show all the rear ends of people. But if I'd photographed down, that's what I would have seen, feet and backs, because we were so tightly packed. Such physical things.

I'm sure I should have done it, but I just, at that moment, said, "No, this isn't right." But now that I come back and I look at what I've got--I knew immediately after I had the things developed that I should go back and try it again, but this wasn't possible. Excuses, excuses! Why one doesn't do the things one should.

Nathan: It's hard to see it while you're in process. It doesn't happen 'til later?

Westphal: Yes, and it also is a matter of--that wasn't the primary purpose for me going there, to photograph, but this now to me was the primary purpose. It has changed. I want to do more of it, move with this idea. I didn't know how fascinating this was going to be.

This is all due to David Hockney. You know, David Hockney is doing this with portraits of people--these Polaroids. He photographs many views of somebody and then it is all put together in a composite photograph. Of course his are enormous. But I mean suddenly I was beginning to see the world as David Hockney. I think art builds on art very much. Or fiber art builds on fiber art. I'm not keeping to the subject, but I think it's all related.

X STRUCTURE AND SUBJECT MATTER IN ART

Nathan: You were saying that art builds on art and fiber art builds on fiber art? All art builds on all art perhaps? Let me try one more quote related to the comment in the book on Wendell Brazeau, the "vitality, invention, and the spirited subjects" that these authors saw in your work and that they felt influenced Brazeau. You had spoken earlier about being attracted to the figurative way of expression. There's the figurative and then there's the abstract?

Westphal: Yes. I think constantly in everything that I do; I bounce back and forth. Sometimes I work completely nonobjective, and then other times I work with subject matter. I think recently--oh, for perhaps the last 10 years--in what I've been doing it's very heavy in subject matter. I haven't done anything really nonobjective, and I think maybe I prefer to work that way with subject matter.

Painting a Momentary Image

Westphal: I don't know exactly what the quote was, but I think that at the time I went to Seattle people were painting landscapes and they were doing still life and they were doing portraits, but they were all quite conventional in their approach. The things I was doing, I would paint a Fourth of July parade or fireworks or I would attempt to put something that I had seen in a landscape in it that was something that only happened for an instant, but it wouldn't be in the landscape all the time. It was very evanescent. It was equivocal in many ways. It would be in and it would be gone, but I would capture the memory of that moment in time when this thing occurred. I think that's what I was doing at that time.

Westphal: I can remember a painting I did, and I think Spencer [Moseley] has this painting. It was a landscape of some driftwood on the beach at La Push, Washington, where a group of us would go every once in a while for a week or so and just paint and draw and do things like that. This was driftwood on the beach, and one day as I was watching, an Indian rode past bareback on a horse.

I remembered this event, so I eventually did a painting, which was large for me, 30 x 40 inches, of a sunset with the driftwood on the beach and the Indian riding by on a horse. Not realistic. Anyway, I think it is that perhaps that they were referring to, because certainly other people who were painting driftwood on beaches just painted driftwood on beaches. Very beautiful driftwood on beaches, but I was doing this other thing, and it was something that wasn't being done.

Pattern and Space

Nathan: I think they mentioned girls at a fair, obviously something very lively.

Westphal: Well, I can't even think what this could have been, but I like to take fashion figures, for example, and do paintings that are based on the fantasy of the exaggerated poses and the exaggerated shape of clothing and textiles and paint this. Of course they don't look realistic at all, but they are capturing the exaggerated movement and the pattern. I'm fond of doing this. I can't remember what this "girls at the fair" was, but I'm sure it was the same sort of exaggerated attitudes that women have in some situations, not sitting quietly for portraits.

Nathan: Yes, the sense of taking what you see as a sort of jumping-off place?

Westphal: Yes, but it isn't the storytelling quality, it's the pattern and the space. You know, the storytelling quality of this thing is not important. I think that looking at these things you wouldn't know what this was all about. It isn't that quality that you would do with a photograph, for example, which becomes kind of a narrative. But this is destroying this recognizable storytelling quality.

Nathan: This leads directly perhaps to what you're doing with your photographs.

Westphal: Yes, I think so. I think--and this I'm not sure, it's just one of these ideas I have about artists in general--I think you keep doing the same thing over and over and over again, and that when you are well acquainted with an artist's work, no matter what he is doing, you can pretty well tell who did this because of the bare bones of this thing, where the weight is in a given shape, say, a rectangle. If the weight is high this is something that is pretty consistent throughout an artist's whole life. It is that structure underneath that is just the way that comes out unconsciously in how he sees things.

Some people always do everything symmetrical: if there's something on this side, there's something on that side. Some people always do things mirrored. Not an actual mirror, but there is this mirror quality of things. Some people always do things completely off balance, to the right or to the left. I think it was John Haley who said that he could always tell when a student was right-handed or left-handed because they started a painting in a certain area and went a different way.

I just bring this up now because vaguely this comes into mind that it was Worth Ryder who said this, "Again we may go back to what is truth." [laughter] Or maybe I'm just making a good story out of something. But I think I'm going to go back to this "what is truth?" and this good story.

I think this applies to all sorts of art, whether it is literature or painting or fiber art or sculpture, you have to make it so interesting that people are going to get infected with watching and looking at this thing or reading it through to the end. It has to be a good story that you're telling, and you enhance those things that you know as reality and you use your imagination and put this together in a way that it captures somebody else's imagination to investigate further.

Bare Bones Structure

Nathan: Both the good story and the identifiable balance. The bare-bones structure, is this true in fiber art?

Westphal: Oh yes. I think it's true in all art. You know, we recognize a piece of Stravinsky. There is a bare-bones structure of the way he puts sounds together and his spatial rhythm on this thing that we

Westphal: always recognize. You know, after you once have known it enough you may run across something that you have never heard before of Stravinsky's and you can say, "It must be Stravinsky."

The same is true of literature. Well, I mean this is a very obvious thing. We would give someone a page of writing that would be from Marcel Proust that they wouldn't know, but they would probably say, "It's Marcel Proust," because of the way he puts things together. Or the kind of description, the interest in details that Virginia Woolf does, the visual details. You would say, if you were acquainted with literature, "This is probably Virginia Woolf."

We look at a textile and you see a little fragment of a textile and you look at it and you say, "Well, because of this and this and this, it's probably Peruvian." This is the bare-bones structure that I'm talking about, not just the warp and the weft, but this whole combination of ideas, space, content, attention to details, to a certain way of putting sounds together, and colors together.

It goes through everything this person does, from the very first. They get more sophisticated, they're more selective-- hopefully, more selective. As you go on you say, "These are the essential things that I want to express." But this other thing is the unconscious thing that is always there, it runs through everything. I guess it's your personality. I don't know what we call this thing.

Nathan: Is it possible to step back to see how this appears in one's own work? Can you say of your own work there is a characteristic organizing theme?

Westphal: Oh yes, I think so, yes.

Nathan: I imagine someone else could; I wonder if you could?

Westphal: I think that if you saw enough and you looked at things over a period of years you'd say, "Well, essentially, I'm doing the same thing over and over again, but it comes out a little different." But basically this structure, this bare-bones thing is there.

Nathan: Something you said a little earlier about the baroque reminded me of your interest in enhancing or decorating or dealing with a surface in a painterly way, not so much building a basket or doing the weaving but doing something on the surface of it. Is that one of the things about the baroque that appeals to you? There's a lot going on on the surface?

Westphal: I think this is probably why it appeals to me now. Why it didn't appeal to me earlier, I don't know because I've always been interested in the surface, putting things on the surface of another structure, not so much in building the structure but in putting the decoration on the surface.

Stimulus and Creativity

Nathan: You also said something about seeing through an artist's eyes, that helps us see something in a way we wouldn't have seen it otherwise. I wondered if there were artists who had spoken to you particularly in this way?

Westphal: Well, this is kind of a difficult question because I don't think I can single out any one. I'm interested in everything; this is a little difficult because it's an equivocal answer. It's not saying anything definite, and I think maybe this is pretty characteristic, but I don't want to say it's either black or white. It's both.

Nathan: It's a perfectly good answer.

Westphal: I think I've said that right now, in the last year, I've been terribly interested in what David Hockney was doing with these photographs, and so constantly that has been an influence in what I'm doing right now. But at another period I was interested very much in what Rauschenberg was doing, and certainly that influenced how I was putting things together. I wasn't copying Rauschenberg, I was just saying, "Well now, hey, there's an idea." You can put all these disassociated things together and get something that works for you.

For example, in this Rauschenberg thing, he uses other art. I don't know if he uses color Xerox, but it is very similar to what I was doing to all these Egyptian quilts. I was using photographs and putting them on in combination with drawing and paint and all this quite surrealistic organization of things, and changing scale and subject matter. Sometimes it would be as realistic as a piece of a photograph against a brushstroke.

Well, this is what happens in Rauschenberg's paintings. So that is an influence. But I think at the time I do it I don't say to myself, "I am going to do something in the manner of Rauschenberg," I just start doing it and then after it's done I think, "Hmm, I was

Westphal: influenced by Rauschenberg," or "I was influenced by Marcel Duchamp," or "I was influenced by Hans Arp," or something like this. It isn't a matter of consciously sitting down and saying, "I am going to do something like that."

Or constantly, for example, I am influenced by Ed Rossbach because I see what he is doing constantly and we talk about what he's doing, and then suddenly I look at something and I say, "Oh, I've taken a leaf out of his book, and now I'm working over this idea." And I'm sure, likewise, he is influenced by seeing what I'm doing. I mean you can't help this.

I'm sure that people looking at these new samurai things say, "Oh, she was influenced by" someone or other; I don't know who they're influenced by. Basically I can't say that. Because I kept this whole diary of what I was doing at that point I realize I was working from materials. I was given this box of stuff. I had to do something with this box. It was torture for days sitting here and working with these things, having to develop a new way of working, a new visual vocabulary, as well as making these things so they stayed together. I tend to always work on something that stays together to begin with and I just put something on top, but here I had to start with the things and make it stand up and make it so it didn't disintegrate. There's just a limit to how much Scotch tape and glue you can use, you know. And these weren't materials that lent themselves to adhere to these materials. So it was a matter of having to figure out structurally how to make these things become a textile.

I think that whole process that I went through was very good for me at that point. I must say that right now, here I am in the middle of this samurai thing, I am not as interested in it now as I was before. Something else has interfered, probably the camera, putting these photographs together, and I'm back putting the modules together again. But I know I have to go back to this because I have a commitment for these things in a particular time. However, if I can't do it that's okay too because I have enough stuff stored away that I can always do this show in March.

Nathan: And where is that going to be?

Westphal: It's going to be at UC Davis. Supposedly, these samurai things will be in it, but I have to do two more, and right now I'm at an impasse on that sort of thing. I went to a certain point and now I've hit an impasse, so I just put it away and I'm working on something else. I'm sure when I get back again it will be easy to

Westphal: do this, but something interfered in what I was doing. Probably if I hadn't gone to Europe I would have just gone sailing through, but I came back a different person than I was when I left.

Nathan: This is interesting. It reminds me of a wonderful phrase you used both in an article and in a presentation at Fiberworks. You spoke about the "egg-beater of your mind."

Westphal: It's whirling too fast at times.

Nathan: It's fascinating. The image was so good because it redistributes, and what comes out afterwards is a different texture than what went in.

Westphal: Yes. I don't feel any pressure, I hope I don't feel any pressure, of doing things to exhibit. I only usually exhibit when I have something to show. And when I did make the arrangements for this show at Davis, when they asked me, I said, "Yes, I'll do it," I had enough things then. But then I got going on something else and I thought it was more exciting. So I sort of changed what was going to be in that show. Basically it's about the same, except now I think I'm only going to have the three-dimensional samurai things in it, if I can get a couple more. I think it might be, anyway, a stronger statement than if I put other things in it, because I'm pretty diversified.

I do a great many things and I don't continue working in the same way for any great length of time. They all look alike in the end, but they may be small pieces of paper or they may be large textiles or they may be clothes that you wear or they may be the samurai figures. But this is a little difficult to--

Nathan: This whole matter of influence is certainly hard to nail down, and I don't think we should worry about it. I was thinking of your bringing, let's say, the clear, pure, Southwest colors up to the grey, wet Northwest, which suggests maybe that regionalism gets blurred because of the influences you bring.

Westphal: Yes, I think now because we have slides and we have people going around the country giving lectures, showing slides, we have good art publications, much better now than in 1946, lots of postcards, people are freer to move around, the airplane has done great things. We can move from one part of the United States to another in a matter of hours, and we do it very easily, we aren't static anymore, and I think the influences move. What I mean by "consciously," some people say, "I'm going to do something like I saw in an art magazine." I'm not sure that this is a good idea; I question this kind of integrity. For me, that isn't integrity, this is taking somebody else's vision.

Westphal: I think although one is influenced undoubtedly, you don't do it consciously. You don't sit down with an art magazine and say, "Debra Remington does great horses, so horses are in, I'm going to do horses in the Debra Remington manner." That sort of thing just doesn't work for me. I feel that what you do should grow out of your interest in the materials, what you do with the materials, and how you see the world around you.

But that's hard to do when you're young, and I think it's young people who, many of them, are trying to find out where they are, and so they use Artforum magazine as a crutch to their creativity. But I suppose we all use all sorts of crutches to our creativity. I think I as much as anyone else like to interpret somebody else's culture, but when I make Japanese paper kimonos I hope I'm not imitating the Japanese kimonos to that extent. I am using their form and their method of making paper, but I'm putting my Xerox images on top and drawing on it with 1984 technical drawing tubes of color and that sort of thing and putting it together in a completely different way. Right now they seem to be acceptable in Japan.

Nathan: Seriously?

Westphal: Yes. I have had several things in exhibits in Japan, these are in group shows, and they seem to be. I don't know what they're saying about them, but I know they're photographing them and putting them in their publications. So some contact has been made.

Ecclesiastical Vestments

Nathan: Wasn't there a garment that had angels?

Westphal: Yes.

Nathan: Was that a kimono?

Westphal: No, those angel things were ecclesiastical vestments that I did, oh, probably in the early 1970s. That, again, is picking up somebody else's method or culture and interpreting it in my own way. We had been in London, and I was at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and they had a large exhibit of ecclesiastical vestments, and while Ed was up doing some serious research upstairs, I was just wandering around. I was vastly impressed by the embroidery on this Cope of Sion I think it is.

Nathan: Cope of Sion?

Westphal: Yes, I'll check the spelling on that one. It was using a technique in its embroidery that is very similar to one of the Chinese embroidery techniques. And then I got sort of fascinated with all these little angels there and the organization, and so I made some drawings and I guess I bought a few postcards that had these particular things. I kept working over in my mind while we were traveling around some more all these terrific little angels and the way these things were put together.

When I came home here was an invitation, from I think it was Philadelphia, which was having an ecclesiastical vestments show and they wanted to know if I'd ever done any or would I do one. So I did my version of the Cope of Sion, but I used panne velvet which is synthetic, manmade, and I used transfer dye. It came in a stick form and I put it on paper and then would iron it on.

I used the organization of the cope with angels, but they were my angels and my kind of color. Then I sewed some machine lace on it. I have a little form that hangs on the back that is my version of a hood. I drew an angel on a piece of paper and had it put on acetate with the color Xerox machine, then I cut this all up in little plates and sewed it on like--I can't think of the word. What are these little things you sew all over?

Nathan: Sequins?

Westphal: Sequins. Like sequins. Large sequins from these little plates of this color and this hung on the back.

Then I did another one, a chasuble one, where I took an angel from a Fra Angelico painting, just the outside shape, and I drew this just as a linear design on a piece of paper. I had it duplicated probably 300 times with the black and white Xerox machine. Then I put my dye on the back of the pieces of paper and cut out all these little angels and then printed them on, so they have a cut edge, but the color on the inside has a drawn one--you see the marks of the color--and organized this in a symmetrical way, so the two angels together created a different shape. I guess this one had machine lace on it too.

Then there was a third one in this group. I looked at these things and I thought, "These are great, but they are too religious in connotation." I sent them off to the show, and when they came back a friend said, "You ought to take these up to Newman Center and see if the priest would wear them." Well, I never was quite brash enough to do this thing.

Nathan: These were wearable?

Westphal: Oh yes, they're wearable.

Nathan: You were just saying that with these wonderful garments that you weren't sure whether a six-foot-tall priest would fit--

Westphal: Fit in this. I thought maybe I had made them all too small. It seems that now when I go around to exhibits and all I'm always checking to see the size of these things. Then I also have discovered that really, this is from television, when you see priests in some sort of a situation on television occasionally, on the news programs, that the vestments tend to be rather short and there are other things and skirts of various kinds that take care of this. After I'd sewn these I thought, "Gee, I've made these too small." Then when I look at museums and sort of visually check the things, they're short, they're small. Then I realize it is because it is a combination of a lot of layers, that these things are just a little decorative patch on top.

But then I looked at all these things and I did one more. I did this, but it has very little emphasis on the religious thing. It only has a line where the cross goes across the back, a line of lace. It was panné velvet. The tension changes as you work on it, and when you sew the lace on it the lace doesn't stretch and the panné velvet does, so you get a wonderful, rippling, shirring movement.

Well, I used this to pull in various lines, and I took patterns from Italian cut velvet and sort of printed these all as a patchwork together on this piece. Of course my interpretation of Italian cut velvet was again done with this drawing and cutting out of shapes and this transfer dye. And I put this garment together so that it would be sort of an evening cover, chasuble, dress to go over pants, whatever. And this is the one the dancer wore by turning it around. I made this one so that it would just fit me because I thought I might go somewhere wonderful and want to wear this thing. Well, it's been hanging in the closet all this time. I never go anywhere that I could wear this, and I'm not sure that I would ever go out of the house wearing it.

Nathan: I'd love to see it.

Westphal: I will show it to you because I'm about to send it off to a show and I have it out. So before you leave I will show it to you. I've put it on, and Ed has photographed me in it. You know, it's a fantasy one goes through.

Transfer Printing

Nathan: Is there a problem about transfer printing on velvet? Is the surface a problem?

Westphal: No, the surface isn't a problem. The reason I use the transfer printing is manmade fibers do not take ordinary wet dyes. In any kind of fabric printing you have to have the dye suitable to the fiber that you are printing on. For years I have been attracted to pile fabrics. I did a lot of printing on cotton velveteen, which was no problem because my vat dyes that I would use worked beautifully on cotton velveteen.

I was absolutely fascinated by the synthetic, shining, panne velvet, but I didn't know how to print on it. Then, just by chance, talking to Susan Druiding of Straw Into Gold, I told her I wished I knew how to print on these synthetic things, and she said, "Oh, I know how. I have a dye that will do it." She knows a great deal about chemistry, and she said, "You need a disperse dye."

Just about that same time she was on a plane, and she was talking to a man sitting next to her. He said he's from England and he sells certain things. He said, "Of course you won't know what I'm talking about." She said, "Try me." [laughter] And he said, well, he was selling paper for transfer printing. She knew all about this, but she had never seen this paper. It was used in England for men's polyester suits. They would print the tweed or the houndstooth pattern or the Donegal or the plaid with this dye on paper. Then this would be transferred on the polyester fabric. It's done with a very special press, with both heat and pressure, and the dye is transferred from the paper onto the cloth. In printing on a manmade fiber, you melt the fibers slightly and the dye penetrates the fiber that way.

In ordinary dyeing on cotton, linen, or wool, the dye is in a liquid and it penetrates the fiber, but water doesn't penetrate a manmade fiber. So if you would use a vat dye on it and then you put it in water, the dye all runs off, or it runs right through. But with the disperse dye the heat dissolves it just a little and it bonds it into the fibers.

So this is what they were doing to make polyester suits look like wool tweeds. He gave her some scraps of the paper, and she made an arrangement that he would send her some rolls of this dye paper. So she gave me these pieces of dye paper to test because she knew I was interested.

Westphal: Well, this was just the answer to my prayers, and this got me off very much on the Egyptian quilts and cushions and dalmatics and all the Chinese things that were all using this transfer printing.

And then I also had these dye crayons that I had purchased-- I guess it must have been on that same trip that I saw all the dalmatics. We were in Scotland, and I walked past a toy store; they were talking about these magic crayons in the window and they said they work on cloth. I read all this and said, "I can't believe it," but I went in and I bought a package and then I came home and tried it and it did work.

So then I wrote to this place in Scotland and bought 20 boxes of the crayons, and I'm still using these crayons. They're wonderful. Since then American companies--Binney Smith--have come out with a transfer crayon which is magic in all the things it does.

Nathan: Was the word dalmatics d-a-l--

Westphal: --m-a-t-i-c-s. It's that square kind of ecclestical vestment that is worn under these other things. It's like a shirt, a big, square shirt, t-shaped, and it's called a dalmatic.

Nathan: I see. So this reinforces your statement that the medium does influence--

Westphal: Oh, it definitely influences me. Very much of what I do grows out of this manipulation. As I'm working with these things I see that it has other possibilities and so I try this, and this influences what I do. It doesn't work the other way. I don't decide here is this piece of cloth and I am going to use all these things. It doesn't work that way.

Plans or Faith

Nathan: As far as you know, do fiber artists work in various ways, some like you and some planning ahead?

Westphal: Oh yes, very definitely. I am sure more of them start with plans than faith. I don't know what else to call it; it's either idiocy or faith. I think maybe it's just actually the joy of doing it. I like to do things. I perhaps am happiest when I'm just doing it, and I really get a tremendous charge out of this thing doing. Time

Westphal: is not the essence. I'm not interested in doing anything the fast way. I'm interested in doing it the way it gives me the most pleasure and I get the best results. I will spend weeks doing some little insignificant thing just because I enjoy actually doing it this way. It doesn't matter how much time, or effort.

Very much I try not to work with things that require fancy equipment. I like to work with the things that I have around me normally; I don't have to have a fancy press. I don't use a heat-transfer press, I use an electric iron. And I don't use a fancy printing table. I just take a piece of plywood and put some polyester and canvas on top of it. I create my tools myself. Then I'm not inhibited. If I use what I have in the house then I don't have this tremendous outlay in equipment that I don't use. Of course this influences very much what I do.

The Jacquard Project

Westphal: Several years ago I was involved in a Jacquard project at Rhode Island School of Design, and I found out that I just loved designing textiles for the Jacquard loom. But this is something I cannot do because I'm not about to get housing for a Jacquard loom and a technician to go with it, because I like the power Jacquard, not the hand Jacquard. These facilities are not available on the West Coast. If I wanted to pursue this with any dedication or intensity I would have to live in the New England area.

This was a terribly frustrating experience because I found I just loved to do it, and I really responded to this whole thing. But it is something that I can't participate in because, excuse number one, it doesn't mean enough evidently to me to pull up roots on the West Coast and move to the East Coast. So it was a nice thing that happened for a period of time, but that was it. And I just loved making the point papers.

Nathan: Are the point papers the cards?

Westphal: No, it's before the cards. The design is put on a piece of paper. I suppose the closest thing we would say, it's a piece of graph paper. Every thread and every pick of the thread has a little square that belongs to it. It's a diagram. So this is really planned. You don't change it after you get it established. So you plan this thing on a piece of paper, and then somebody takes this piece of paper--

Nathan: How big is the piece of paper?

Westphal: Well, the size isn't the important thing. The important thing is the number of little squares per inch, both horizontally and vertically. Each one of these squares represents one thread and one intersection, in the fabric structure.

Let me see if I can project back. I think these had about 70 threads across. No, 70 wouldn't be a good number. It would be a number that would be divisible by four. So it would have that many across, and that would represent the number of threads that the machine was able to produce before it would have to reproduce the pattern again and again. Also this would go down the same way both horizontally and vertically.

These are filled in, and your whole design is composed of little squares. But they're so tiny, so fine. These are probably going to come out to about 40 to 80 threads per inch. So these little squares are so tiny that you aren't going to get a jagged pattern, you'll get curvilinear forms and things like that.

Well, it was at a time I was working down at Fiberworks as artist in residence or something in the gallery, and I was doing a series of paper and cloth textiles. They were paper pasted on cloth, of images that I did in the copying machine, distorted images of sports figures. So I decided to do one of these Jacquard patterns--several of them actually, but only one of them turned into a piece of cloth--of these sports figures. I have one of John McEnroe playing tennis. Of course at that time I didn't know it was John McEnroe. I am not a sports fan. I was just interested in the image, and I thought it was Bjorn Borg, but it was John McEnroe.

I worked this out on point paper and it was woven and I went back and selected the threads and told the technician how many of each of these types of thread to insert per inch. I was actually going to make them into a jacket, and when I got it back to do this jacket I couldn't cut it because I knew I couldn't do it again. It was too precious for me to cut up. And this is unusual because I can cut up anything, but I was so intrigued with this whole process--

Nathan: How big was the cloth?

Westphal: Well, the piece of cloth is about 30 inches wide. I have about two yards' length of this cloth and then I have some variations. It happened so fast, you know. Doing the point paper is very, very time-consuming because you are sitting here almost going blind filling in these little squares.

Nathan: Making all those divisions.

Westphal: All these little divisions and all these little things. It isn't just black and white; there are various kinds of patterns in this. There will be twills and herringbones and checks and things like this that the whole pattern is built up of, so you almost go blind, you almost go crazy because suddenly you don't know when you're drawing a twill-- You may be drawing a twill that moves from left to right, but suddenly your mind will flip and you start making the marks going the other direction. It's funny, but you do.

I was absolutely fascinated in doing point papers, so I did several of them. But only one of them was cut into cards, which a technician does. This man works for a mill in Rhode Island somewhere, and all he does is cut cards.

Nathan: Do you indicate colors?

Westphal: No, no, not then. I was going back and I would make the decision there, because of the way this project was set up. It's a very old Jacquard loom that lives at the Rhode Island School of Design. Because of their limited budget and all, it just had a black warp on it. So that was one limitation. And then I could put anything I wanted through it as weft. I went to Straw into Gold and looked at all the little very fine yarns that they had. There wasn't too much because they were dealing mainly with hand-woven things.

Nathan: Is this silk or wool or--

Westphal: Well, the warp was cotton, and what I finally used as weft was a combination I think of synthetic and metallic, or something like this. I found a couple of things that I took back, and then they had a supply of things.

Actually what I ended up using was the very first thing that I had selected. I did that and I did a whole bunch of samples, and the first one I selected was the one that was the best. So this was fun to get a piece of material. But then--I mean you have spent all this time. Everything is very slow, everything is very slow, and you actually get to the Jacquard loom and the power shuttle is going back and forth like mad.

Nathan: Did you see it actually being woven?

Westphal: Oh yes, you see it. And then every once in a while the shuttle gets loose and makes a hole in the wall or something like this. This is a dangerous piece of equipment, but there is a technician there who works in a mill normally, and so he is keeping this machine going. You sit next to him and you say, "Let's try some red." So he gets a red bobbin and sticks it on the machine. It starts going, and I raise my hand. "We've got enough red." And then we try some other color.

Well, this is fascinating, but then pretty soon that isn't going fast enough. I mean this machine is able to produce two or three yards of material in a morning, you know. But this isn't fast enough. It doesn't seem to go fast enough. It seems too slow. But this is a fascinating experience.

I'll never do it again. It was very frustrating because after this period all I could think of were all the variations. I wanted to do on the Jacquard, and it wasn't possible. When you are working, just controlling everything yourself, you can explore as many of these variations as you want to, as long as you have interest and time. But when you are in a situation like this, you have to make a decision before. You can't explore all the directions, and that in itself becomes frustrating.

In that project, I think there were about eight or ten different artists who did it, I think the whole group wanted to do it again. They felt they could do a better, more interesting design after they had experienced it the first time. Several of them in the group have gone on to purchase fancy equipment to work on and are working on it or getting it underway.

One of them is Cynthia Schirra, and the other one is Lia Cook. Lia just told me the other day that she has almost gotten her Jacquard head set up, but this will be hand Jacquard. She has bought a computerized loom, which is the closest thing to a Jacquard. And Cynthia Schirra works on a computerized loom. These people are weavers, and I'm not. Maybe there were two of us in the group who were not weavers, who were "surface designers"; I hate that word, I think it's a terrible word, but this indicates textile printers now.

And everybody wanted to do it again. I think they have tried to get it going again, but grants are few and far apart for schools, as well as for individuals. Money is tight. This is a costly project because you're not producing a product, but yet you need the technicians from industry, and the materials go fast and they're

Westphal: expensive. That is the least cost, the materials; the technicians are the highest cost, and you can't do it without the technicians on this machine basis, and the machine basis is the fascinating part.

You think, oh, you can design for industry, but I know from past experience you really aren't free. You are so restricted by other people's taste and other people's wants and the cost control stuff. This was free, very free, it was almost like just doing your own thing at home.

Nathan: I was interested in that connection with the designs for industry that you did for a number of years.

Westphal: Yes, but these were for printed designs, and I fortunately was on the West Coast and the agent was on the East Coast, and I wouldn't have been able to stand it if we had been in the same city because the pressure was too great. This way I could just be free from any of these things, and it was his job to sell them. You know, whatever I did, he would have to try to sell.

Nathan: Did you feel any connection between these point papers and what you are doing with your photographs? You are cutting up and reassembling them.

Westphal: No, no.

Nathan: This is totally other?

Westphal: I guess it isn't totally other because it's all based on a grid. The paper kimonos, you see, are based on a grid too. But this other repeats itself mechanically every time. No variations can occur in the photograph because of the way I put them together and the way sometimes I turn them upside down. I haven't tried this, getting them printed at different times so I'll get different color things which I hadn't thought of until just this moment. This is something I'm going to have to try, have different printers print the same negative and I'll get different colors and then I can put them all together, you see, in one thing.

System with Variations

Westphal: The thing that I like is a system, not a system that is regular, but a system that goes awry, that each one of them, the little piece in the module, has individual variations. To use a very

Westphal: profound metaphor, it's like the human race: we're all human, but each one of us is an individual. When all the individuals are put together, you don't get clones, you get a variation within the individual. You say, "Okay, they're all people," but you recognize each one as an individual person in this mass of people.

This is what I am trying to do in the kimonos. I put together these little two-inch by four-inch pieces of paper that have similar images on them, but each one is slightly different, and then it goes together to make a whole forest of nasturtiums in Monet's garden.

Nathan: Are you still doing the kimonos? Is this a shape form that appeals to you?

Kimono Shape, Spiral, and Symbolism

Westphal: I like the kimono shape because it's rectangular. As for constructing out of paper, it's almost essential because paper, although it is tough, it is still fragile and it doesn't go around shapes very well, it hangs flatter. You can pleat it and things like that, but you can't do two curved pieces of paper and have them hold together structurally. When you put an arm in it, for example, that doesn't work. So the kimono form doesn't have any great technical difficulties as far as construction is concerned. Again, you know, if you think about it, it's working with rectangles, which are paintings which are sewn together. I can sew paintings together into a kimono, and maybe that's what a Japanese kimono is when you think about it. Maybe it's a series of paintings, a series of scrolls, sewn together that a human wears.

So, again, I'm doing a Japanese kimono. I'm making the paper right now for another one. I thought I was all through with that, then I had an invitation to exhibit the kimonos.

Nathan: Will this be in Japan?

Westphal: No, as I mentioned, these will be in Portland, if they ever get the letter to me, other than the telephone call. I find great difficulty with the present-day world; everybody does everything on the telephone. I have gotten burned a couple of times with people making proposals over the telephone and then they don't carry through with them. So now I try and say, "Well, this is fine. I will agree to it tentatively, but send me a letter." Then I will sign something. This is the difficult thing.

Westphal: So I've got one hanging fire, sort of, on the paper kimonos. I went over the group of those that are available now, and I have enough, but I don't like to send a show out that is that large that doesn't have something current in it. The last one of these that will go out is 1984, January of 1984, but I would like something in the show from November or December of 1984. So I'm pulling paper sheets again and starting on another kimono. I sort of have an idea now of where it is going and what subject matter it's going to be. So this will have to be worked out before the end of the year.

Nathan: I was interested in your discussion in the book on Chinese embroidery, about the significance of the placement and how certain things go on certain parts of the garment. It places wearable art in another dimension. I hadn't particularly thought about the message that the garment gives.

Westphal: This is very important. I think perhaps we see it more in Asian cultures. We see it in the Japanese kimonos and the Chinese court garments. The ones we're familiar with mostly are the Ching dynasty. And there are all sorts of conventions. For example, the Chinese garments fasten left over right for both men and women. We have men going left to right, and women going right to left on clothing. All the Asian garments go the other way.

On a Japanese kimono, when you look at one of these fancy, dress-up kimonos, the right-hand front of the section of the kimono doesn't have any pattern on it. The left hand has the pattern. And there will be a spiral that moves on the kimono from left to right. So the right-hand front piece is underneath, and that doesn't have a pattern on it or it has an insignificant pattern. The whole direction spirals around the figure; it isn't static. On the silk, the wonderful kosode that the Japanese women wear, they all have sort of a spiral, it is not static, it isn't symmetrical.

For example, the Ainu in northern Japan wear these stiffer garments. They're very symmetrical and they don't have this spiral on them and they're not bound tight by the obi. They become more a t-shaped, stiff garment with decoration in specific parts: hem, middle of back, shoulders, that sort of thing. It's kind of interesting.

My favorite Japanese kimono is one that has a bunch of ribbons tied together just to the right of the nape of the neck in the back and flows in a spiral both directions around this kimono. These are like patterned ribbons going down, and they're all printed. This

Westphal: isn't three-dimensional, it's just printed on it, as if this bunch of ribbons is tied on the back of this kimono. To me, this is absolutely almost the height of a piece of wearable art, this particular kimono. A wonderful textile, the way this has been designed to move around the body. So although the person would be very quiet and very still, the garment would have this grace and movement to it, although it's fitting tight around the little column almost, with a thick waist.

Nathan: Is this something in your collection or something that you have seen?

Westphal: No, it's a very famous Japanese kimono from, I think, the National Gallery in Kyoto. It's one of their great treasures, a great work of art, and to me it's just absolutely tremendous, this particular kimono.

You know, you were asking about what artists you are really impressed by, or like, or influence you, I think maybe more instead of artists, it is a particular object. For example, of all the Japanese kimonos, this, to me, is the greatest Japanese kimono. I love this one. I love others for various kinds of detail in them all or technique or how things are put together, but this one really speaks to me, and it has over a number of years; I haven't tired of that one. Although it's something that I don't do in the paper kimonos. The paper kimonos that I do are pretty static, they don't spiral, but they're to be worn. If they are worn, they're worn loose and the grid that I begin with always is very apparent.

Nathan: Sort of rectilinear?

Westphal: It's a horizontal and a vertical.

Nathan: You mentioned that someone wearing the wonderful ribbon kimono, has the thick waist, which one visualizes with the obi. Is that an important part of the visual perception?

Westphal: Yes. I think it's a very important thing. It makes the Japanese woman figure like a little straight column. It is this tall, long, straight column and it has this bump out the back from the obi being tied and the back neck edge of the kimono is pulled down so the nape of the neck shows because this is a very important seductive facet. This is the spot for the Japanese, the nape of the neck. And this is pulled down and the obi with the knot and the back of this kimono collar, as it were, all make a setting for this nape of the neck, which is under the big puffed-out black hairdo. It's

Westphal: all organized around the nape of the neck, but these ribbons work because you realize they flow through." These things are hard to talk about without the real object there to see.

Nathan: You do express the whole quality, the freedom of the ribbons, but they're really not free.

Messages from Wearable Art

Westphal: No, they're just printed on cloth.

But I think all of these things make wearable art fascinating because you are dealing with something that is changing its position, it is giving a message, and you also have these social, sexual communications that you are making by the clothing.

For example, an important thing that is going on right now--maybe it's past, maybe they're doing something else--when you look at young women on the Berkeley campus in their pants, you see directly across the top of the buttocks the line of the bikini underneath. This is all very much a part of the costume because this line that moves across gives a movement when they walk. It is attracting attention to the rear end, and it's very much part of the clothing and the message that they're giving off, whether they know it or not.

I watch television. I'm fascinated by a program in the evening called "Wheel of Fortune," not for these lovely prizes people win or the puzzles they solve, but I'm interested in the people, what their occupations are, what parts of the country they seem to be coming from, and what they choose from this awful collection of stuff and how they go into ecstasy over a car, especially a red sports car. If they win this thing they practically collapse, they are so overjoyed, it is the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to them, to get a red sports car, especially if it costs \$24,000. This whole thing. And then you know what part of the country they're from, what their job is, how many children they have, you know a little bit about them, and then you see what they select, what their choice of all these objects is.

I'm going to talk about wearable art. There are a host and a hostess on the program, as all quiz shows must have, and they're all saying the cliché things of our time. They have a very lovely young woman named Vanna White, blonde, a beautiful young woman who

Westphal: slithers around the stage in the sexiest clothes. You feel she is a streetwalker from Los Angeles in these clothes they have her in. And everybody just roars and thinks these clothes are wonderful, and they are the cheapest clothes. Not cheap moneywise, but cheap in message they're giving off. Slits up to her thigh, fringes, low necks. It's absolutely fascinating to see these clothes on television. It isn't the kind of clothes to see if one watched "Dynasty" or "Dallas," where they're using high fashion designers to do these very elegant clothes for people to go off in their fantasy world, to think of themselves in these kinds of clothes. But this other stuff is almost the Fredericks of Hollywood image. And it's fascinating to see this happen night after night.

I'm not making moral judgments on this woman. What I am saying is, clothes give off a message, and you read the total message of what these clothes say. To do wearable art you have to tread a delicate line between art and what the clothes are saying. It's more than doing a painting, because a painting just stays on the wall and it isn't offending anybody. But if you're going to really put a person in it, you've got another quality to think about.

Nathan: You're attaching something to a person?

Westphal: Yes, in a way. That person is becoming part of it. You can do these things and fantasize. Maybe that's what I do about wearable art, because not very many people wear the clothes that I make. It may be that the fabric is too shiny or the color is too strong, I don't know. Maybe you just can't figure out a place to wear it. The Chinese things that I've done, I've worn one to do a lecture and I wore one in Vienna to the final party at the end of the conference, but I don't ever put them on in any other surroundings. It's great to be able, you know, not to say a thing, you just stand there and shimmer. [laughter]

Nathan: You are communicating.

Westphal: Yes. When I did wear it I was talking about wearable art and in each case it was wearable art. Also, if you could read the imagery on the Chinese top, it's using the same Chinese imagery. It's using heaven, earth, and water, and lots of bats and butterflies, and all this happiness. People don't know what these things are saying, but a bat means happiness in Chinese symbolism.

Nathan: And then those squares that you explained that indicated rank, like a badge.

Westphal: Yes, it's a badge. It's the same thing as buttons we wear. I don't think this political campaign has come out with many buttons, which is a little sad because sometimes these political buttons are absolutely wonderful. You know, what are the collectors going to collect in the future if we don't get going on this thing?

I have some absolutely marvelous things in political objects that I got at the time Jimmy Carter was president. I have a 14-inch high plastic peanut with a smile on it that I bought in the airport at Atlanta. I think it may be a bank. I have to look, but I think it's a bank. And then I have a little peanut that is a toy that sort of shuffles and moves from foot to foot.

Nathan: A wind-up toy?

Westphal: A wind-up toy. And there are wonderful toys that are connected with political campaign fights for this one. But the badges--I mean maybe things like that have transferred from people to cars. You know, the bumper strips that we put on our cars that give off messages. Clothing for cars. [laughter]

XI COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, LANGUAGE, EXPERIENCE

Lectures and Shawls

Westphal: I just recently went to the campus, to a lecture. I hadn't been on the Berkeley campus for a lecture for a long time, and I was very much amazed at how many students were there for this lecture, all standing in line to get in.

Nathan: What was it?

Westphal: It was Claude Lévi-Strauss, his lecture. And obviously, after I was in there a few minutes, I realized that somebody had assigned this to their class. I watched these students and I was terribly interested in their reaction. I, unfortunately, could not follow the lecture because I couldn't follow his English. I had great difficulty understanding it. I found it was too much of a strain to try and translate this thing into something that was meaningful to me, although it's possible when it's written in the book. It was very interesting to see him and his enthusiasm for what he was talking about and also to see the students' reaction to this. I rapidly found out in watching, because I was sitting quite far back, that they weren't understanding any more than I was understanding. [laughing] I would have loved to have seen the papers that resulted from what they heard in that lecture and what they understood.

It was a very funny experience because two or three days later Monique Lévi-Strauss, his wife, who is an expert on shawls, Kashmir shawls, was up, and we were sitting on the floor, Monique and I, looking at some shawls and talking about them. People were telling her all these marvelous places to eat, and she was trying to write down the word. And suddenly it occurred to her that they were speaking French. It was Chez Panisse that they were saying. And

Westphal: she was saying that she could get along very well until people started to speak French, say a word in French. Well, we got around to what I refer to as Mulhouse, France, and she didn't know what this was.

Nathan: Mulhouse?

Westphal: Mulhouse. [spells it] And suddenly it dawned on her, and I was laughing, I said, "This is a French word, but I know you don't understand me," and I spelled it out. She said, "Oh, Mulhouse." [pronounces it mool-oose] Something like that.

Nathan: Yes.

Westphal: But then I was thinking how funny this was because, here, a few days later I went to this lecture of her husband, and I couldn't understand "maternal" and "paternal" and "phenomena." It was very funny.

Just experiencing this trip we went on just recently, for three weeks we heard German almost exclusively. By the time we got off the plane in San Francisco, it just seemed very good to not hear this German around you. The strain was too much. Although I understand a little German--I don't speak it--just the strain of trying to understand made you a little tense. So I felt this about the lecture.

Nathan: How did you happen to know Monique Lévi-Strauss?

Westphal: I'm trying to think. Neither Ed nor I had met her until she phoned a few days ago and came up to the house. I think it was because of Ed's book on paisley. It's either that or through another textile artist, Sheila Hicks, who is a friend of Monique's in Paris, and Sheila Hicks had been visiting or something like this. I don't really know.

Ed and Monique have been corresponding about the shawls, and Monique did a large exhibit in Paris, maybe three years ago, of Kashmir shawls that was a very, very wonderful show, a very complete show, and she sent a catalogue. Ed and Monique have been writing back and forth, and that's how I happened to meet her. It's one of these things. You have a great deal in common with somebody who's on the other side of the world, and unfortunately you're not going to make contact again. This is one of the really sad things, I think; you are surrounded by people who have no similar interest, and then somebody from the other side of the world--

Nathan: And you end up sitting on the floor, looking at beautiful things.

Westphal: Yes. We were looking at the way our design had been modified in the paisley shawl, how suddenly the motive had broken from this very stylized thing and a straight line was inserted. We were speculating on whether the person who wove the shawl decided to try this, whether it was a mistake and if they had decided if they had done it at one corner they maybe should do it at all. So, I don't know. This is what we were discussing, and the width of the borders and the shape of the mirabs.

Nathan: The shape of the mirabs?

Westphal: Mirabs. M-i-r-a-b. It's the pointed arch that is in Islamic art.

Visual Means of Education

Nathan: There's an interesting connection here between the problem with words and the way that you drew students into the experience.

Westphal: Yes, and I think that so much in our world is based on language and written language that we forget that there is this whole visual language. You know, I can communicate beautifully with a man in Japan over a textile, and we don't have a common language but we appreciate this same textile and we can understand what is going on in it. And back to education again, I really think I'm an educator all the way through, but I'm always trying to tell somebody a story and open their horizons a little, open their windows so they can understand more about this thing visually.

I'm not putting down language because I think it's essential to be able to write well and I think it's essential to be able to read and understand what you're reading, but not everybody has this skill. That doesn't mean that they can't appreciate things and can't understand things, because I think you can do it all very much through visual means. Man did this before he had a language, and just because you have developed a language it doesn't mean you have to discard visual communication like last year's shell on an animal.

- Westphal: I was very interested in teaching the class at Davis, Design VI. Of course, as with everything, after a certain period of time I have had it, I'm tired, I want to move onto something else. I think that this maybe was responsible for why I decided to retire in 1979. As I mentioned earlier, I had been teaching solidly for 13 years, and I wanted to go onto something different. I wanted to go back to where I was before, where I was just painting or doing textiles or doing my thing. I was tired of solving other people's problems. Not only art problems but life problems.
- Nathan: I can see how students would come to you for all kinds of help.
- Westphal: The teaching experience that I had after I was 40 was very different than the teaching experience when I was directly out of college. I'm appalled that I ever got through the five or six years of teaching I did when I was out of college because it was on such a different level. And I was surprised when I went back, when I went to teach at Davis, what was involved in teaching. But I was surprised that this was so different.
- Nathan: These ideas are exciting. We were talking about language and experience.
- Westphal: I think maybe we finished language and experience. [laughter]
- Nathan: Right. Then there is the difference in teaching when you're just out of college and when you're a more mature person.
- Westphal: Well, this period--oh goodness, what was it? It must have been 16 years and I hadn't taught in that period--in the meantime students changed very much. And of course I was much older. I think when I first began teaching, we were almost the same age. When I first began teaching I think I was maybe 26 or something like this, and the age gap wasn't that great.

Well, by the time I was 20 years older the age gap was very apparent, and also by that time I was very definitely much more established in an ease with working with materials and teaching something that I had been involved in professionally. So it was a very different experience than teaching when you're first out of college. I guess pretty much what you're doing when you're first out of college, you're imitating how you were taught.

Art History and Art Experience

Westphal: Now, when I look back on it, although I think it was a good education, I think of it very much in relationship to my feeling of art history and what I think I'm involved in in my life right now. I had had a lot of art history, and I was a reader when I was in college in Los Angeles and also at Berkeley, for art history, and so I had a pretty good knowledge of art history.

In 1956, Ed and I went to Europe, supposedly to spend his whole sabbatical year in Italy, and both of us, I guess, all the time he was teaching, were doing some freelance textile designing. As I mentioned, this is what I did all day long; I designed textiles for industry, and had an agent in New York, and the goal was to save all the money and spend a year in Europe.

Well, we achieved this, so we went to Europe, and we progressed from England down through Belgium and through Germany, through Austria into Italy. And we ended up at Venice. We had bought a little Anglia car, so one day we got the car out of its parking garage and drove to Padua to see the Giotto chapel in Padua.

I walked into this chapel and I was absolutely stunned because I knew all the paintings but I knew them as easel paintings. It never occurred to me that these were all jam-packed together and they were really an environment. They were an interior of a building; they were on the walls, they were on the ceiling, they were the whole environment that totally surrounded you. You were surrounded in this absolutely marvelous blue color with all of these browns and pinks and tans of the figures moving across them.

It was a real revelation to me at this point, and I realized that you had to really experience these things, that you couldn't just know all these things from photographs in the books or slides. When I took art history, all the slides were black and white, so I never had this sensation of this wonderful blueness of this building. Well, this was a real revelation at this time, and I don't know why I could have been so stupid, you know. Here I was, 36 years old or something, and I didn't realize that this was all around me. I only thought of Giotto as single paintings with an edge around them.

We stayed in Italy for nine months or something like that, and lived in Rome. I really loved Rome, and I loved walking around the streets of Rome, and saw how it was organized and how you could get from one area of the city to another very fast by taking a triangular route.

Westphal: I looked at all the fragments left from Ostia Antica and discovered that the marble pavements were all covered with sand for the winter. We went to Pompeii and wandered around there, and saw all the museums. It was a really very, very wonderful experience.

Well, by this time I was completely intrigued with travel and wanting to see all the art I ever could. So I think I am still going around looking at palaces and churches and paintings and sculpture all over the world and really wanting to experience the real things instead of just knowing it from a book. I think it's important to know it from the book, because you know what you're going to find or what to look for, but the physical impact of coming in contact with these things, of standing in the middle--

I can still remember the sensation of walking up the Acropolis in Athens, and thinking, you know, here is this building that I know from a slide, a photograph in a book, and I can walk around to the back of it and see the Porch of the Maidens over on the other side and see this glorious, sort of yellowy color of the marble and how little and dinky it seems compared to the enormous size it seemed when you saw it on the screen as a slide. And I couldn't quite believe that I was there, and I felt if I only knew the address of the person I first took art history from it would be fun to just send him a postcard and say, "I have really walked on the Acropolis."

Then, this has carried over, walking down the distance between the columns in Luxor and looking up at the capitals and seeing how much bigger the Egyptian buildings were than the Greek buildings. The Greek buildings were tiny. At Olympus were the tiny, little pillars that are left. They're so delicate and fragile compared to the massive structure of the Egyptian buildings and the Singing Statues. What are they? The two statues that stand out at the edge of the Valley of the Kings, between Luxor and the Valley of the Kings. I can't think what the name of these two statues are that were named Singing because the wind blew through them. I have terrible lapses in memory now; I will go along fine, and then I can't remember the key word.

Nathan: You know, we can always drop it in later, so that's not a concern.

Westphal: It doesn't bother me, I've learned to live with it. It's one of the benefits of age, I guess. [remembers] They are the Colossi of Memnon.

Westphal: Occasionally a key word will drop out of the whole thing, and it's like Ma Bell on the telephone company, a wire broke.
[laughing]

I had an absolutely fantastic experience about three weeks ago. We had taken a tour into East Berlin, the other side of the wall. And we drove around East Berlin and saw the buildings, and I can only marvel at the recovery these people have made under terrible conditions. And finally the last thing on the tour was going in the Pergamum Museum.

A year ago we had been in Berlin, but Ed and I did not go to East Berlin because we had to spend that time in the Bauhaus archives. Ed's sister had been with us the year before, and she had gone into East Berlin and she said, "The last thing on the tour they took us to was the Pergamum Museum," and she said it was a great big building. And I said, "Oh, that's interesting. Pergamum, the site in Turkey. I can remember this." But I never thought very much about Pergamum. All I can think of is a very hot, dry amphitheater, but they had a tiny, little museum, that's what Pergamum really is to me--a site in Turkey. And they have a tiny little museum with some lovely little Eros figures in it.

She said no more about the museum, and I didn't think any more about it. So this time we walked into the Pergamum Museum, and we were sort of trailing after the guide, and suddenly she was going to show us something first, and she walked through a doorway, and I was absolutely astounded: here was the whole Ishtar Gate. I mean, I was taken right back to those art history papers that I used to read in 1939 or 1940, where students had to identify this lovely Ishtar Gate. Here it was in the museum, in East Berlin, with all its beautiful blue lines on the golden tiles leading up to this gate. I didn't see anything else in the museum at that point. I had my camera with me and I had bought a ticket to photograph, but it was too dark in there to photograph with the film I had in it; I hadn't intended to use it for that purpose.

So then we went out farther and here was a facade from Turkey, and it's carved in the rocks. The guide was off talking somewhere and she was probably telling what it was. It's on a travel announcement for Turkey, one of these walls all cut out of stone, pillars and pediments and all this going on.

And so I photographed this for a while, and Ed said, "Look at that, it's just like the photograph in the window next to the hotel." I said, "I simply didn't see it." All I saw was the Ishtar Gate as we went through. Then there were some other things that I was

Westphal: photographing in other parts of the museum from Pergamum, the frieze around the top and some of the marble figures that were very wonderful. It was a marvelous museum, marvelous space. Again, I mean, you always wish you had much more time, but there was this funny thing of "Now I have seen the Ishtar Gate." I didn't even know it was in this museum, and I feel stupid about these things, but I guess you can't know everything.

Nathan: That's what is so exciting.

Westphal: Yes. You never know when you're going to come on one of these tremendous surprises. Of course, now I'm just back and I wish I had another chance to go in certain buildings again and see more things about them.

Nathan: Is the Ishtar Gate very large?

Westphal: Yes. I would think the gate itself is probably 60 to 80 feet high, but the opening is not too wide, it's probably 15, something like that. This whole face of it has all the animal forms. They have taken the approaches to it, that are at a diagonal wall, up to the gate and they don't have all of them installed because the room wasn't big enough at the museum. So they have maybe one-third of all this procession of lions or goats up to the actual gate itself.

But to think of all this beautiful glazed tile. It's very fragmentary, and they have done a very good job in restoration in that they have put in blocks of the same color where pieces are missing, but they aren't glazed, so you can immediately tell between the dull and shiny parts which are the original and which is the restoration. There isn't really enough of it to have made it work if they had just set it in white mortar, but darkening these things you really get the feeling of the scale and the size.

These little lions that go up the side on these diagonal walls that go up toward the gate are in pretty good condition, and each one is slightly different from the other; this is a whole concept that I love.

Repetition and Variation

Westphal: I love the idea of a module repeated, but each time changing just slightly. So instead of it being a lot of things that are exactly alike, as a machine product is, they are really all individuals. But they all look alike, they're part of the same family, as it were.

Westphal: I don't know. I try and think about doing this in what I do. I am interested in repeating the same form over and over again, a lot of little things to make a big thing, but each one of these little things is individual and different. So it is like people; each one is individual and different, and yet we're all people.

And dogs are all dogs, even though there are little individual differences, even within a single breed, that it isn't just personality, it's just that they happen to be that way. So here we are back to dogs. [laughing]

Dogs and Drawings

Nathan: Shall we follow the dogs a little more? You do have dogs at your house?

Westphal: I am just an absolute nut about dogs. I find that they occur as an image in an awful lot of things I do. Right now I'm working on some things for a show that will be at UC Davis in March, as I mentioned. I've decided to call the whole show Neo-Dogmatism, which I think is terribly funny. [laughter] The emphasis here is on "dog," not on "dogma." I found that in looking back over what I've been doing in the last three or four years, a dog seems to be very much a part of it.

I enjoy the animals that I have right now, Sam and Molly. Sam is an English springer spaniel and Molly is a young beagle that is about to drive me crazy, except I must say, now that she is two years old, she has sort of calmed down. She's charming and lovely but a very willful creature, the willful child.

Nathan: The one who doesn't want to play with the dollhouse?

Westphal: Yes. Exactly.

I'm very interested in seeing how these dogs react to things, and they're very decorative, so they occur in what I'm doing. I'm interested in the idea that dogs have adapted so well to our society. If you look at the cars passing by on the road, there's usually a dog sitting contentedly in the back seat, looking out, enjoying the world. They can do anything that a person can do.

Westphal: I did a whole series of drawings--well, they're collages, really--that are using the copying machine in this way. I use it in this module of printing many copies of one drawing, and then modifying each one of these to become an individual by drawing on top of the black and white copy or using a color copy and adding to it and adding things.

Well, I did a series of drawings after we were in Japan that are called, "Should Dogs Speak Japanese and Wear Kimono." The little dogs all have kimono on that are all decorated in different ways and they are doing important touristy things in Japan. They will be going to a shrine or looking at Buddha or something like this. And then they will make apt comments, in phonetic Japanese, in little balloons like cartoon strips, about "They could eat more" or "It's very pretty," and "I want to go home," and this sort of thing.

Nathan: And you know a little Japanese?

Westphal: No. I know a few words. You know, "How much does it cost?" and things like that. When we took Japan Airlines, they gave us a little book of Getting Along in Japanese, or something like this. In taking trains and things like this, I thought it would be interesting to learn some of these things, so I was trying to learn the phonetic Japanese for these things. Then, just in looking at these, they look like such strange words. They look much stranger than the word any other way, so the dogs speak phonetic Japanese. It is not their natural tongue.

Nathan: But they've adapted, haven't they?

Is this a little book about dogs speaking Japanese?

Westphal: No, it's a series of drawings, and there are about, I think, 25 in the group. I think they were all done in 1981. I spent the whole year. I didn't do any textiles, all I did were these drawings. They're not large, but I was working on them constantly, and there are, I think, about 25. They run in size from, oh, 12 x 16 up to 18 x 24. They're small drawings. I like to work rather small. I occasionally work large, but I find I'm much happier doing small things.

Nathan: Do you envision doing something with this collection?

Westphal: No, I don't envision doing anything with anything anymore. I think I have learned my lesson that nobody really is as much interested in these things as I am myself. I enjoy doing them, and

Westphal: I think I do art, textiles--whatever you call this thing--and I don't make a differentiation between art and crafts; to me it's all art. I do it simply because this is the thing I love to do. I like to do this better than anything in the world, and evidently since I was two years old I have been cutting and pasting and coloring.

Catalogs for Shows

Nathan: I was fascinated by those books and catalogs that you produced for your shows. Do most shows have some sort of printed material to carry away?

Westphal: No, not shows that I basically am involved in. It takes a great deal of money to publish a catalog. You have to be awfully important before they publish a catalog on a collective exhibition or on an individual exhibition because if it is a catalog in depth it's going to cost a lot of money, and they want to make sure they're going to have enough sales. The pass-out ones are very few and far between.

I think to a certain extent I'm basically an educator, and I'm interested in communicating, and furthermore I like to use the machine and combine visual elements with words to try and explain what I'm doing. I thought because the show was so varied and there was so much material from this "New Treasure for Tutankhamen" that would be terribly confusing to people. I just put together that little sheet to have in the gallery for people to take, something that had those images on it that I had done, something for people to take away with them. Not that they took it, I guess you learn this in teaching.

Teaching and Resistance

Westphal: What people are willing to accept and feel important at the time is a very, very small little bit of all these pearls of wisdom that you're dropping before sows. [laughter] That's a terrible condemnation of the educational process, but I think that probably the hardest thing for a teacher to do is break down the resistance of the young about having any information passed out. Everybody knows best what they are willing to accept, and at the point they hear these things they probably are off on a completely different tangent and are resisting like mad.

Westphal: So pretty much I think what you do as an educator is you figure out ways of playing games on the students to inspire themselves, to have them absorb what you're trying to give out. That sounds terribly cynical, but I guess this is the way I feel at age 65. I probably felt very different at the beginning of my teaching career because I don't think I realized how little impact I was making. As I got to know students better, because I was an advisor at the end, you know, I was having lots of contact with students who were just coming in and talking, and I was seeing where they were going and what they were thinking about. I realized how little impact one really does have.

You're very idealistic when you begin teaching and you think everybody is absorbing everything you're giving out, and then you realize that there's very little that gets across. If you make an impression on one student a year, perhaps you have achieved it. But this isn't a reason for not doing it. Some of us, I think, just love to tell other people about things, something that we find wonderful and mysterious to us, then we want to transmit this to somebody else. Of course I feel very much that that's how learning progresses. You're in a marvelous chain and if you know something you teach somebody else how to do it, or tell somebody else about it, and then they in turn go and tell somebody else, and our knowledge broadens. I think that, on the other hand, you find this terrible resistance.

The worst teaching experience I think I've ever had in my life was the last one I had, and I don't want to do it again, simply because I had so much resistance from a group of people who all had their own ideas of what they were about. They didn't agree to accept a suggestion or even willingly do something that I suggested for six Saturday mornings in their life.

Nathan: Were these older people or younger people?

Westphal: These were graduate students, and they were graduate students at Fiberworks. I know that it may have been my fault. I don't know, but all these things I had done with other groups, older and younger than this group. I wasn't being anybody else than I normally am, but they rejected my quality; evidently it wasn't profound enough for them. They were all bent on being superstars in the art world. I feel that all the superstars, before they became superstars, had somehow learned to walk and learned to write the alphabet and learned to tie their shoelaces. These people were all, I think, convinced of their own great, wonderful qualities and that they had a new insight into everything. They're not willing to accept one little grain, and it was a very disenchanting experience for me.

Westphal: I still haven't gotten over it, this impact, because I have never had that kind of a relationship with students; I've been very fortunate. They have, for the most part, all accepted and were eager and did wonderful and great things. This group did not do wonderful and great things, they did pretty mediocre things, because their minds were all elsewhere. It was a whole six weeks of griping about other things, not about me, but their whole intention in this series of Saturday mornings was griping about other situations. They could not put them aside and just come into this room and do something completely away from their gripes.

Nathan: In a sense a failure of concentration?

Intuition, Intellect, and Having Fun

Westphal: Their interest was somewhere else completely and I couldn't capture it in any way. They felt above everything I suggested. One of the sessions I was working with was a manipulation with a Xerox machine. Now, I had done this all over the country with people in my own age bracket down to college students, and they all really entered the spirit of this thing and played with this machine for what it had to offer and what they could pull out of it. This group really resisted it.

One woman in this group, this was a young woman from Switzerland, had the imagination to see what wonderful things you could do with this machine that you weren't quite in control of. They weren't willing to accept the accidental, they wanted to be in control of everything. The whole point of what I was trying to do was to show them that somewhere in their psyche there was an intuitive quality. If it could come out and be released wonderful things would happen, and all they had to do was train these things and develop some sensitivity to what was coming out. But they were trying to push it, the hard, intellectual point.

Nathan: So you saw a conflict between the intuitive and the planned approach?

Westphal: Yes, very much. And they were resenting it and their interest was in griping about everything, not particularly what was going on. The fascinating thing about this was, I was talking to the person in charge of this program and saying how unhappy I was with this and how miserable I felt over it, and he said, "This is very strange, they said they just loved it." And I said, "I've never had so much foot dragging in my whole life and so much

Westphal: inattention." I'm not used to having that sort of reaction. I'm much more used to having the reaction that people are just spellbound by this thing and go along with what I'm saying or just off on flights of imagination. Whether it is true or not, you know, I'd come right up against this.

I had a similar experience I think in this keynote address, that I gave you a copy of, in Vienna. Many of the old Europeans could not accept what I was saying: wearable art is not art, this whole casual approach to giving a lecture, to having fun with it was not part of their world. They resented it, and some of them really came up and told me this, you know, I had no place there, I had set back the American cause a hundred years by this. [laughter]

But on the other hand I had young people who were very excited about it. I guess a week later one of them met me in the museum in Vienna, and in very inadequate English told me that when he got back to Düsseldorf he was going to try some of these things and try and enliven what was going on in his area.

Well, I had gotten the message through I guess to young people, but the establishment couldn't buy it. But, on the other hand, I couldn't abide by the establishment's viewpoint. But it was very funny that we had a generation gap because I was older than the establishment was in many cases. I couldn't accept the younger people when they were giving talks and had very static ideas of the great difficulty, and you must go one step at a time, and there were all the rules and regulations.

Nathan: And preferably suffer?

Westphal: Yes. And suffer. And I was saying you had to break all the rules, you know.

Nathan: Did they see it as a threat?

Westphal: Yes, it was a threat. I suppose this was the most radical thing they had ever come up against in their lives. To have somebody who was older than they saying this, I think it just didn't work, although it was fun. I had taken over three younger people to actually do workshops. I organized the thing and gave the keynote address, and then these younger people did the workshops. The four of us got together and decided that this was what they would like to do; they wanted to do these workshops and they planned what they were going to do.

The Pull: Teaching vs. Producing Art

Nathan: Were they faculty members?

Westphal: Well, two of them teach at Davis. One is Jo Ann Stabb and the other is Dolph Gotelli. Joanne is in costume and Dolph Gotelli is in environment.

The third person is Debra Rapaport who was at Davis. She did a radical thing in her life as I told you. She gave back her tenure appointment to the University and resigned. She decided she didn't want to spend the rest of her life teaching at Davis. She was very young, the youngest of the group. She wanted to be an artist in New York, and so she resigned her tenure appointment and went back to New York.

I think this is just delightful because so much emphasis in the University is this crawl to the top, pushing everybody else down around you, being competitive with everything, and climbing this academic ladder and achieving this tenure status and then sitting back. And this wasn't the way she wanted to live her life, and so she got the tenure appointment and she resigned. I'd just love to see the expression on the administration faces when this happened. They couldn't believe it, you know. All these people had worked so hard on committees to get her this tenure appointment, and then she resigned.

Well, I think it's what many of us have wanted to do, but for some reason or other don't, mainly economic or maybe because you realize if you do this thing you give up something that is very meaningful to you. I feel good teachers are so involved with this that this becomes a very great part of their life.

I think that when you are an artist and you are trying to maintain your own work and you're also teaching, you are constantly pulled in two directions. However you try and pull these things together to be one, it doesn't work because you're working at both ends of the thing. You're working at the abc end in your teaching--you have to learn how to spell--and in your own work hopefully you're working on the real structure that puts it together, the literary output--I'm using this as a metaphor--of a very complex structure. And so you're constantly being pulled apart that way. You're being pulled apart by a need to work and make the decisions yourself, and with teaching you are part of a team.

Nathan: I wondered whether in your actions with the students what you plant may take a while to work?

Westphal: Oh, I'm sure it will, I'm sure. I'm not sure that it will ever grow with this last group, but maybe it will; you know, it's hard to say. But I know that this is one of the things you do in education, you plant a little seed, and then some time later somebody says, "Aha, it came from way back there and suddenly I'm interested." It takes this course. I didn't mean to imply that I only thought that immediate results were important. It's lovely, it's beautiful to get immediate results, but when you are always suspicious, "Is this only just a one-shot deal? Will it ever happen again?" Well, even if it never happens again, that is important it happened once, and at one point in that person's life they had a true creative experience and insight into something that was meaningful. It may only be a memory, or they may have this tangible object as a result, but I have the memory of something wonderful happening, and maybe that's important too.

I think in art very much it isn't only the concrete things, it's the things you remember, and maybe even the things that you don't remember, that you only feel intuitively. But somewhere in this mixture of what we are this little thing has entered at one point. It may not come to the surface again, but it got in somehow because it made a contact.

Nathan: Is it possible to suggest how an artist locates, finds, and uses these experiences and memories?

Westphal: I don't think so. I have no idea. I think that you have to be sensitive, you have to be open to these things, you have to not say no immediately, I think you just have to flow with it, and not try and inhibit things. You know, if you decide ahead of time what you're going to say yes to and what you're going to say no to, the result may be very dull.

XII THE VIENNA ADVENTURE AND THE WORLD CRAFTS COUNCIL

Nathan: I didn't want to lose your train of thought of going to Vienna with your three aides. Would you like to talk a little more about that?

Section on Wearable Art

Westphal: Yes. This happened after I had retired from the University. The American Craft Council called me about the American--and it was called "American" at that time--contribution to this craft council, World Crafts Council, in Vienna; they wanted to do it on shelter and clothing, these two aspects. And this was their proposal. They asked me if I would do the section on wearable art. It wasn't clothing as manufactured or merchandised clothing, not fashion, but there was a real movement starting around the country of artists doing clothing to wear. For no better word, they called it wearable art. I'm not sure that's the right word.

I had learned to say no. But the nice thing about when I say no is I never necessarily mean no. It means time to think. I will change my mind. One day I will say it's black, and the next day I say it's white. I don't feel that anything is absolute. I can change and I don't mind saying I changed my mind.

The Team and the Proposal

Westphal: But I said no to them. I said, "I really don't know anything about this," and they said, "Oh, we think you do, and we think that what we want to do is have the way you treat things come across."

Westphal: And I said, "I'll think about it." So then somebody in New York in the organization called to put a little pressure on, and I said, "All right, I'll do it. But I will only do it if I can bring my team"--by this time I had a chance to think--"I don't want to do it alone. I want to do it as a team. I feel that if this thing is to be successful, it has to have a bigger impact than just one person." They didn't see any reason that couldn't be accomplished, and I said, "I'll send you a proposal."

By this time I knew how organizations worked. From many years of training at the University I knew how to write a proposal. I wrote them a very elaborate proposal. I suggested these people and I talked to them slightly, Jo Ann and Dolph here; and Debra. I just really wrote her and I said, "This is how you plug into it, here is what I have proposed." I said, "Nothing may come of it."

So I sent my eight-page document off to Vienna with all these various plans. I was planning something for the conference, something for the artist, something for the educator, something for the community, and all on various things. It was a very optimistic plan because I just looked at this proposal and it's going to need money. I didn't know how much money they had, nobody had said anything about it. Well, they got this proposal and they were aghast because they obviously could turn this into dollars and cents. They thought it was pretty extravagant, and I said, "Well, it was just a proposal. It was something to start with. We always have to have something to start with, and we can trim," because I had really padded what we were going to do in this proposal. It was idealistic.

Well, then I began getting letters from Vienna. Absolutely, they wanted this plan to be part of the conference. The man in charge of the program was Peter Rath. He is part of a family business that makes very elaborate glassware. They do glass and crystal on an international scale. But he wanted this proposal, and so he said, "Yes, but we have to find a way." And then I began dealing with the man who was in charge of the American section. By this time--

Nathan: How long in advance does all this take?

Westphal: I would suppose this was about 15 months in advance. About nine months along the line I was having difficulty because the Canadians had pulled out. They wanted to do their own thing, they didn't want to be part of the American thing. It became very nationalistic at this point. Canada has a large budget for things of this sort. So when Canada pulled out, all their money went out. The United States

Westphal: has a very small budget, it has even less now, but at that time it had a small budget. This wasn't the State Department that was doing this, this was the American Craft Council, and they did not have large funds to do this, and the World Crafts Council had even less.

Slide Kits

Westphal: I finally said there would be no exhibit because I didn't feel that they had enough money to protect the pieces, insurance-wise, and I said, "I will not explain to anybody why a piece was stolen or vandalized." They said, "Well, this wouldn't happen in Vienna." And I said, "Well, I don't like it when it happens to my things, and I don't want to explain to anybody else why something was destroyed." I didn't feel that their security was adequate.

I said, "I think we can overcome this by workshops and slides and that sort of thing," but no real objects would go. So then they finally said, "Well, we will pay your way and give you accommodations, but we can't pay the other people." And I said, "Unless everybody goes on the same basis, nobody does."

This went on for, I suppose, five months, back and forth, back and forth. They didn't have the money, and I said, "Well, then you don't have it." Then finally they came up with the money to send the four of us over and pay for our accommodations during the conference. They said, "Well, we hope you know that you're very tough and that you are the only people being paid." I don't know whether that was true or not.

So we all went, and part of the way they paid for this was that I produced a slide kit. It's called, "Wearable Art--Vienna 1980." It's put out by the Education Department of the American Craft Council, and they sell the group of slides. It's \$150 or something like that. It's not cheap, but there are over 100 slides in it, and there is a long, written explanation of what's going on in the slides and what is shown in each group. They could get some money from that, and they gathered little bits and pieces from all over and got enough to send the four of us over.

We wrote to artists all over the United States and Canada and asked them to submit slides, and the three of us who were on the West Coast--we couldn't bring Debra west because we had no money for plane fare; we had enough money for postage--we made a selection

Westphal: of these 115 slides from something like 4,000 slides. When they sent their slides, we had them send a statement of what they thought they were doing, of what their wearable art represented. So we had a wonderful, vast amount of material to work from.

Nathan: And with how many artists were you communicating?

Westphal: I would suspect we were communicating with from

Nathan: And how did you compile the names?

Westphal: Let's see if I can remember all this. This all seems so long ago. We each went through magazines and took names out of magazines. We took them out of exhibition catalogs. We contacted museums and schools around the country and asked for names from these people. Then we wrote letters to these people, and we said, "If you know someone who is working in this area, have them communicate with us," and then we could tell them all these things. We had asked for, I think, five or six slides from each person. Some people sent us as few as one, and some sent as many as 50. We wrote to the Canadians too, but some of them participated, others boycotted us completely.

So then we just sat down and we went through these slides, and we accepted some and rejected some. There were many that didn't fit what we were about, they didn't understand what this whole thing was about. We narrowed it from that number down to what we eventually used in the slide kit. It was as fair as we could do it.

I was giving a lecture several years afterwards and was showing slides from this group of wearable art and talking about this experience, and someone on the floor began arguing with me about this jurying.

Nathan: What was the argument?

Westphal: Well, that this really wasn't showing what was going on, that there weren't many loom-woven garments in the slide kit, and this person was arguing with me that loom-woven garments were being produced all over the country. I couldn't quite hear what she was saying, and I thought it would be fair to the whole audience if that person would come up and we would share the microphone. Well, this made her furious. She absolutely refused to come up.

Westphal: Suddenly here the whole lecture, at the end of the question period, got polarized, and there were people who were saying, "This is exactly the right way you were doing it, it was fair," and there were other people who were disgruntled about this because there weren't woven things in the slide kit. I didn't mind because I think that when you get a discussion going, you might as well go on with it and get both sides aired, but I couldn't do anything because this other person started something but she wouldn't come up.

So after this lecture was over I happened to see the unhappy person, and I went up and I said, "I really wish you would have come up. By the way, what is your name?" I turned her name tag over and I realized it was somebody we had rejected because I recognized the name I said, "I know your work. It was beautiful, but you have to remember that even though I liked it, I was only one of several people on this committee, and actually it was one of the very few woven things in the group."

This is what it was all about. And of course every time you are on a jury or you open your mouth and you say something, you're putting your neck out to be chopped off for little things like this. But I think this was fine because I felt that when this sort of thing happens it means that people really have a brain, that they're willing to stand up and say, "I'm willing to fight for it, I'm willing to talk about it."

Creativity and Participation

Nathan: And isn't controversy part of art?

Westphal: Controversy is part of everything we do. We cannot have a whole world like a bunch of sheep following along; we have to have different opinions and it makes things a challenge. That's why we grow because we change and one person challenges another's idea and says, "Let's try it a different way."

The conference was wonderful. It had great variety. Debra and Dolph did a marvelous event. Everybody who came to the conference brought a piece of some sort of textile.

Nathan: It could be their own?

Westphal: It could be their own. It was something they were willing to give away, it could be an antique piece. Each person had to bring something of their own with them and we deposited it in boxes, and then there was a workshop in an afternoon where Dolph and Debra and the number of people who wanted to participate created things out of that box on themselves, put together clothing right there on the spot, with Scotch tape and pins, and these were wonderful things.

Dolph and Debra worked as a vital, lovely team, tremendous excitement in how they began building things on people, and this carried over. This is exactly why I put them in this proposal to begin with because of their ability to get other people involved in something. Their own terrific enthusiasm and imagination, this sort of spilled over, and everybody began doing something. Then we had a little parade through our conference grounds, and it was fun and it was great, and people enjoyed it. Dolph and Debra, every day of the conference, would dress up in some sort of extravagant way and just walk around.

Nathan: Would people stop them and comment?

Westphal: Oh yes, everybody would talk about it. And one day Dolph had some of these fluorescent dots that are about 3/4 inch.

Nathan: Are they paper?

Westphal: They're paper, they're in office supply, and I think you use it to keep files. He had sheets of these and he put polka-dots all over his clothes, and as the day progressed the dots would change and more dots and less dots, and constantly he would change this and just walked around with all these dots. Well, some of the people got so outraged because of this. I don't know why.

Last night in a restaurant downtown Ed and I overheard a conversation, I think it was a conversation about the political situation, but what came through was this word: "Berkeley is in a time-warp." Well, this is wonderful, "Berkeley is in a time-warp." I mean we're used to this sort of activity. We have the polka-dotted man in Berkeley who is marvelous, and all the time he's walking around in his polka-dotted clothes.

But this was an outrageous statement to people in Vienna, it's such a conservative city. It's a wonderful city and it's so conservative. I didn't know this about Vienna. To me, Vienna was very imaginative, and you think it all has this wonderful gayety, I suppose like a Hollywood movie, much of our thoughts about the world are controlled by the movies, the "films" we must call it now.

Tattoos and Body Paint

Westphal: Jo Ann is very interested in body painting and tattooing, and she has an extensive collection of slides, so she gave a wonderful lecture on tattooing and body painting. I mean the establishment really went for that.

Nathan: They did?

Westphal: Yes, they were very interested in this because there is a man in Vienna who is studying this, and he came into these lectures. He was the one academic who was really for what was going on, and he came to all these things and he really got involved, came and had dinner with us, and that sort of thing. But most of them didn't.

He was working on tattooing, and so he invited Jo Ann to come and view a film that had not been released as yet on tattooing. Jo Ann asked me to go with her, so the two of us wandered out through the maze of Vienna buses and found the place and they screened this film for us.

It was terribly interesting. Much of it was dealing with tattooing in other parts of the world, but then they had gone into prisons in that section. Only prisoners in eastern Europe are tattooed.

Nathan: The prison doesn't tattoo them?

Westphal: No, it's against the law to be tattooed in this part of the world, so the prisoners tattoo themselves in prison. And they had photographs of these tattoos. He cautioned us while we were in Vienna, when he saw the photographs that Jo Ann had, to not approach these people if we saw somebody who was tattooed because they were mainly people who had been in prison and it could be very dangerous. I think we could have survived it; I don't think they would have attacked us for admiring their tattoos. But we were cautious, because we did see a few people on buses and streetcars or subways that did have tattoos, we could see them below their sleeve or something like this, meaning they were covered, and it was against the law to be tattooed. Of course it's a very different tattooing from the beautiful patterned skins of the Japanese, this beautiful patterned garment of skin.

But the whole thing, I think it was very successful. It was successful in that we had an absolutely wonderful time. We loved Vienna, we went all over it. We were there two weeks. The

Westphal: conference was one week. The tickets came through with a two-week span of time, so we all decided, just on our own, we would stay the full two weeks and enjoy this. So we really had a marvelous time enjoying Vienna and seeing all the museums and just being in this atmosphere.

Nathan: Yes. I was interested in what you said earlier about trying to find the window through which a teacher gets to a student, if you can open the window. Did you feel the people in Vienna were opening a window to you at all?

The Costume Party

Westphal: Some of them were. The last night of this conference, as I had built into this plan, we were having a party and I said, "Well, the last night we'll have a costume party, and everybody will either wear a native costume or they will make a costume or wear something other than street dress."

There were many internal difficulties in Vienna. They were running short of money, the people griped about the accommodations, they were griping about the food, which was abominable.

Nathan: - Were these people from all over?

Westphal: All over the world. And they were paying high prices for this conference, as for any conference, and the food was the worst I had ever eaten. In fact, I didn't eat it. Nobody was eating it. It was all shoved to the center of the tables. So Peter Rath and company called us in and said, "What can we do to liven this up?" And so we published a Xeroxed newsletter every day with little drawings and messages about what was happening at the conference and ideas about wearable art, and let's get going and have this a costume party. Well, it worked.

Nathan: Really? How many people were there?

Westphal: I have no idea how many people were there. It was large, 300 to 600 people.

Nathan: Oh, that many?

Westphal: Yes, it was a big conference. I would suspect 600, something like this. They managed to get some donations from some of the Swiss and various people in Vienna. They announced that the dinner was going to be catered and it would be served by waiters. The whole thing got very festive. They got musicians and they made the last night festive, people wearing costumes. Well, what was wonderful was they made their own costumes, many of them made their own costumes of what they saw happening in art. There were many people who came with dots. And other people had gone down into downtown Vienna and found all these little stick-on stickers of various things, Air Mails, Aeros, all this sort of stuff, and they were going around with packages of these, and when they saw somebody who was in a suit, mainly the people who were in charge of the thing who hadn't worn their costumes, they would go and paste stickers all over them. [laughter] You know, this whole thing began to get spontaneous. And Peter Rath wore his Austrian leather costume.

Well, you know, it was a very wonderful, lively event. And they had a little section up the hill with a pond and a little sort of amphitheater, and after the dinner we all followed the musicians dancing up the hill, we went up to this amphitheater for the rest of the party and just sat around and talked, and some people danced, and they had wine for us, and it finally ended with a very nice evening.

Return in 1984

Westphal: Well, what is interesting about this is, in 1980 when I went to Vienna. Last summer (1984) Ed and I went to Vienna, and I got off the train and in a taxi from the train station to the hotel I couldn't believe this was the same Vienna, and Ed said, "Well, this doesn't look like what you described as Vienna." And I said, "No, I'm appalled: it looks like Los Angeles. It's dirty and it's gray and it's overcrowded." The Vienna that I saw in 1984 was not the Vienna I saw in 1980, although the buildings were the same and things were the same, and, believe me, the museums were the same-- I don't think the dust had been dusted off in four years--but it didn't seem the same. It was gray and it was dull and it was oppressive. We went out to the conference grounds where the conference was. It was all the same, but it didn't have the glamor of this other experience four years before.

Westphal: I enjoyed it on a completely different plane, and I got to places that I hadn't been the first time, and saw this time very typical Austrian life out in the country, surrounding areas, which I hadn't seen before. It was a completely different experience. I couldn't realize that it was the same Vienna. The first conference was just as July and August were changing, and I was there in early September. So it wasn't that far different in time. But one had been gay and was summer, and the other was moving on toward winter and it was dullness.

Nathan: Had you already gotten into your appreciation of the baroque and the rococo before you went to Vienna?

Westphal: No, not before I went to Vienna the first time.

Nathan: So Vienna acted on you?

Westphal: Yes, yes. That was when I really first saw baroque as something I enjoyed when I went to Vienna the first time. It had been slight, from Versailles, but not a real passion because I got much more interested in the French palaces and gardens and things like this after I had been in Vienna rather than before. I mean I had seen baroque palaces in France, but I just sort of walked through. I wasn't involved in it really thoroughly until Vienna.

The Lippizaners as Ballet

Nathan: When you saw the Lippizaner performance, do these horses have special things to wear?

Westphal: No, the horses are almost nude. [laughter] They have the minimum of saddles. This was one of the most impressive things that I have ever gone to. It was not like a circus, it wasn't a performance, it was a work of art. It was a ballet with man and animal, completely coordinated. It was dividing the space of this palace. I cannot imagine it in the Cow Palace; it's going to be here in November. But I can't imagine it happening in the Cow Palace because the space that they use in Vienna is the ground floor of a little palace, a baroque white and gold palace with crystal chandeliers, and the floor area is very soft, very beautifully raked dirt, and it's raked like the garden at the Ryoan-ji Temple in Kyoto. And there're all these vertical stripes in it and there are two poles. The whole thing is very formal, it is very subdued, and very quiet, and the horses go through their maneuvers, they're dividing the space.

Westphal: They do the whole space, they divide it in half, in quarters, and diagonals, very formal, to Beethoven and Mozart. The riders are all in dark brown, and the horses are all shades of white, grey, and there's one black horse.

Nathan: Do they wear head gear?

Westphal: No, no. No plume. I don't think they do. I have to check this, but I don't remember any plumes. Plumes, I think, are circus. I think there is a big difference. Not just Barnum and Bailey circus. We went to a tiny little circus a couple of years ago in Zurich. It was called the Circus Noch, and they had about six horses, and they all wore plumes on their heads and galloped around very fast in circles in a ring, but that was a very stepped-up performance. The horses were practically smiling and saying, "See me? I'm doing this thing." But you felt that these horses and these riders would be doing this with the same seriousness if no one was there. And this very controlled, very ritualistic thing. Then they did something that was called off the ground exercises.

Nathan: Oh, Airs Above the Ground?

Westphal: Airs Above the Ground, yes. One horse at a time would perform mainly and do this business of standing on its hind legs and then jumping and throwing the back legs. But among the group they had one learner, and all that one did was walk up and down along the side of the wall--the man is not riding the horse at this time, the man is on the ground--and he was making the horse go up and down. So that one was learning how to be a performer.

And there were all grades. It starts with four-year-old stallions that are the performers of tomorrow. The horse is at its peak of performance when it's about eight or nine years old, and then it eventually gets put out to pasture. There's only one horse that did the most complicated things and it was the oldest of the group. They evidently were learning, and each one had a limit to what it did, and the rider did not push beyond this point. Each horse was successful at its point of accomplishment, which was lovely because you saw no failures, even the horse that was out performing just walking up and down the wall. That was what it was doing, and obviously, sooner or later, when it got to be six years old it would go out and do some of these other things. It was an absolutely wonderful thing. I wish I had known much more about what they were doing.

Westphal: We, fortunately, were seated, because when we first knew we were going I wrote the concierge at the hotel to ask him to get me some tickets. Then when we had to cancel the first trip, I wrote him again and said, "We can't come, but we're coming at this time, will you get tickets for that?" So when I got to the hotel he was standing there with the tickets for me, and he got wonderful seats. So we didn't have to look around any columns or anything, and we could see it. The woman who was leaning over me knew exactly what was going on and she was counting with each thing, then she would say to the person with her, "They changed and now they'll go do something else." She knew exactly what was going on.

Travel Plans and Travel Literature

Nathan: I know you are fond of travel, and what you have said suggests that Japan may also be an important part of your travels?

Westphal: Yes, it is very important. After I was there the second time I thought, "I want to go back immediately." Well, now it has been two years and I have not gone back and I wonder now if I will ever go back because in the meantime one of these tangents has come in and I'm absolutely fascinated with West Berlin. I'm fascinated with East Berlin too. There are all these places that I would like to reinvestigate in Berlin. Of course, you can't keep going back to these places and you can't keep traveling all the time, and so I don't know. I'm still as fascinated about Japan, but I have all these little pieces of paper around the house where I write out imaginary trips, and I'm planning little trips all over the place. I know how long the trains take or where these things are in relationship to each other. I have boxes of literature on all various sorts of places.

I collect travel literature because I find out how to do things from tours. Where convenient places are to stay, and hotels, and I have learned which category of tour I think uses the kind of hotel that I'm comfortable in, and all sorts of things that I just pick up from travel literature. And so I plan all these little tours. I have various tours planned.

Right now I'm thinking about going to Italy. We're going to Washington, D.C., for a few days at the end of April, and I think, "Well, we're five hours closer to Italy!" [laughter] And seeing the Mozart opera, I recognized a little section of Hadrian's Wall when that came on, and I said, "Look, Ed, there's Hadrian's Wall."

Westphal: When we were there in 1956, I had looked so concentratedly at that wall, how it was constructed, when the little detail came up I knew that was Hadrian's Wall. Well, suddenly now my little mind is going, "Now, these are the places that I want to see if I go to Rome. I don't care about these other things, but these are the places that I want to go."

Nathan: Of course that's the beauty of being able to be selective; you can do this.

Westphal: Yes.

XIII TEACHING, WRITING, AND DISPLACING SPACE

Nathan: We were talking about technology and writing.

Westphal: I used a tape recorder on that little book of the dragons, other animals, simply because I wasn't quite sure of how this narrative was working. I wrote some of it out and then I read it into the tape recorder. Well, I noticed I had all sorts of peripheral sounds of things from the neighborhood. I would hear planes going over and everything. But when we played this little bit just now, I don't think all these sounds are coming in your machine, and it's the same house, the same place.

Nathan: That's interesting. Maybe the microphones differ.

I might ask about your writing. Do you sit down to the typewriter or do you say it out loud first?

Westphal: Nothing goes on the typewriter. I handwrite.

Nathan: That's right, you told me you didn't like typewriters.

Westphal: I don't like typewriters, so I write very fast. And it's exactly like I talk: I try not to structure this, it's almost a stream of consciousness thing. I find that so much of what I was doing, when I even had the idea of doing this book, grew out of my teaching; and since teaching was always verbal, I wanted to be sure. I didn't have an audience out there. I depend very much on audience reaction and bouncing off people's facial expressions, whether they're falling asleep in a class, or I am telling somebody a story. So when I sit down and write, I have no audience, I have no one to bounce it off.

Cut-and-Paste in Writing

Westphal: I got the idea I would bounce it off myself. And so after I had this thing written out, I would sit down and I would read it into the tape recorder; then I would listen to this, and then I would go back and put in the verbs I had left out, make the sentence structure better or make things clearer, or move things around.

I do a great deal of cut-and-paste when I write too. I cut it up and reorganize it, after I hear it. And then I would again read it into the machine to see if it would sound as a flowing thing.

I find that it is easier for me to distinguish this when I hear it than when I just see it, because I think my attention lapses on this thing, but if I'm listening to it I can hear. I wanted to have a rhythm that is an easy rhythm if you are listening to it, and I think this comes over when you read it.

A Good Story

Westphal: Now, something I wanted to talk about before, about a good story. I think we always have tremendous influences on our lives, people who are important to us, who say important things that get us off on tangents.

When I was a graduate student at the University at Berkeley, I was a painting major, and the major professor I worked with was Worth Ryder, and he was an absolutely wonderful person. He always told a good story. I corrected papers; I was a reader in his art history class, so I had a great deal of contact with him in this. We would go over the material for when I read the papers and all. I think I was a very dull, dry little girl at that time, and he said to me, "You know, the important thing is to tell a good story, and it doesn't matter whether it's true."

And this really sort of shocked me because I think at that point I thought everything that everybody uttered was absolutely gospel truth. With this in mind, I realized he was doing an awful lot of embroidering of fact in his art history lectures, but you remembered them. You remembered that the important part of this particular monastery was that he climbed over the wall with a friend

Westphal: to view it. Something about the architecture or..... I can't think of other examples, and this one probably is an inaccurate example, but somehow he made art history pretty much alive because he always put himself experiencing it, and you realized his experience, not just what was said in the book.

I think that is not probably what we think of as the ideal way to learn art history, but for me it made art history alive, and it certainly gave me a sense that I wanted to see things, I wanted to experience them out in the world. And I've been traveling ever since that period in time.

Art Reorganizing Space

Westphal: Now, this is all going back to when I was a painting student, but right now I'm defined as a fiber artist. I think this goes into a little bit of what we were talking about as we went through the living room and saw Ed's new basket. We were talking about when does a basket become a pot, and I said that I thought this was making categories based on use.

I think that all art pretty much displaces space, and I really mean this about painting too, that what one is doing in painting is pretty much taking a flat surface and in some way, whether it is modeling through light and dark, or whether it is a planar construction, transforming that flat surface into something that has a spatial movement, a spatial depth.

I think the same is true whether you are working in ash splints and newspapers, as that basket of Ed's is, or whether you are making a pot out of clay, or whether you are building a house, or doing a painting, you are reorganizing space in some way. You are reorganizing space into your interpretation of what that space is. You are creating an illusion, a mystical illusion. It is your way of reorganizing this and telling somebody something about how you perceive something in the real world or the imagined world.

And if we say, "Is it a basket?" or "Is it a pot?" or "Is it a house?" we are not describing its art, its esthetic function, we are describing its useful function. I know that all sounds pretty far-fetched, but it's sort of what I basically believe, and this is why I feel that whether I'm successful or not, I like to move in all directions.

Westphal: At one time I designed a house for a piece of land we had, and put it out to bid and the price was so astronomical we retreated and got an architect, because I thought, "Do I have enough confidence in myself to make such a big mistake?" It's all right if it's a little, tiny thing, and I think it was probably a very good idea that we got an architect because we've had a wonderful house. The result was this marvelous, imaginative house, because we put no restrictions on the architect as to what it would look like. We just needed a certain amount of space that would work for us. So it was a great house until we outgrew it, because we changed and the house didn't change and it wasn't possible to change because of Berkeley's building code; you know, one house on an R-1 lot.

But I think the same thing occurs if you feel that you are not making a basket or a piece of clothing, that you are just displacing space. You're free to move in any direction you want, you can experiment in any field. Since I am not doing this to earn a living, it's only me who has to be pleased, if I can ignore all that outside. But that isn't easy, everybody needs an audience.

Now, about this fiber artist business. I never thought of even "fiber" as a term for what I do. I'm not sure fiber is a good thing because it is defining a material, and we don't call paintings "paint," and we don't call sculpture "marble," or sculpture "bronze." "Fiber" is an adjective really, not in this way. So it's a funny idea. I like to call it "textiles," but I know Jack Larsen says what I'm doing is not textiles, what I am doing is "fabric decoration," or something like that.

Well, this is all sort of nit-picking. I'm doing my thing, and I happen to like to paint, and so I print fabrics, because I'm doing the same thing. I am using color and putting it on a surface and creating a three-dimensional illusion of some sort. But since everything has to be put in pigeonholes and categories, I ended up in the fiber artists pile. Well, that's okay with me, I don't care what I'm doing, but basically I think I'm a painter. When I did ceramics, I made pots to paint.

Nathan: You made pots to paint?

Westphal: To paint.

Other People's Art Forms, and Visual Impact

Westphal: And then they moved into freer things that weren't just containing forms. They became more sculptural and more figurative, and I'm pretty tied up to the figurative world. I'm also tied up to taking other people's art forms, the Japanese, the Egyptian, and sort of reorganizing them the way I see them, and using my materials at my scale, and doing something that is reminiscent of another culture.

Basically, I like doing this. I think it all started because this was a way to work when I was certainly in the fiber area. When I was teaching about textile history, I recalled things as much from visual impact as from words, maybe more from visual impact, so I would draw the thing. It got into my mind through an actual drawing of the form, or trying to make a linear description of a three-dimensional textile structure, something like this. Then I began playing around with these ideas that another artist in another time had used, and suddenly I wanted to sort of push myself back, and maybe think I'm a Japanese artist living in the Heian time, and making kimonos for the court. It's that sort of funny thing. Not actually, but sort of basically, I am pushing myself to some other time.

Nathan: And does this sort of kinesthetic experience help you get into the mind frame?

Westphal: Yes. I don't sit down and think I am going to do it in this way, I just sit down and things begin to happen, and I don't put too much restraint on this.

When I'm working, I never do a plan and execute the plan. I may make a few little scratches upon a piece of paper in this little notepad. [gesturing] This is going to be a quilt and it is based on baroque architecture. I was talking to Ed the other night, and I did this little thing, and I said, "This is what's going to happen on this new quilt that I just got the piece of material to do," and he said to me, "That's it?" [laughter] And I said, "Yes," and that's as far as it's going to go in sketch.

Materials as Guides

Westphal: I've been thinking about this for a long time, and this sort of indicates this field of lines that I scribbled around on a piece of paper how this organization is going to be, but nothing more will happen now until I actually start working and manipulating the materials and printing them on the piece of cloth. But there will be no drawings. There will be just working with the materials and the materials will tell me what to do next.

Nathan: You were saying that you would be printing on the cloth; will you then embroider on it also?

Westphal: Oh, I have no idea.

Nathan: You don't know yet?

Westphal: I don't know. I just know that by March fifteenth I have to have a photograph of a quilt that I, unfortunately, six months ago said I would do for a show in the East. I don't feel like doing a quilt now, but I made a commitment, I have to go through with it, and more and more I'm trying to avoid these commitments because I find they're terribly restrictive.

Now, I really want to do samurai armor but I have this quilt hanging over my head. Six months ago I wasn't working in a definite direction and I said, "Oh fine, I will do a quilt, no problem." And I don't feel that I want to go back really to that time in my life when I was doing quilts.

Nathan: It is certainly a sign of recognition. To be invited is always rather nice.

Westphal: Yes, that's the way it has to be from now on. I don't aggressively go out and try to get shows. I think basically I don't want to send things out. For years I haven't entered any competitive shows; I just don't want to do it that way. And even more now I don't want to even accept invitations to do something like this. But it harks back to a past time. Of course these people in the East didn't know that I wasn't doing quilts anymore, that I had stopped doing quilts 15 years ago and I never wanted to do another quilt in my life. And here the invitation came, so I accepted it and now I regret it. But that's the way.

How Art Builds on Art

Westphal: I think that art does not occur like Venus on the half-shell when you are born. I think it is a process that somehow mystically has been instilled in you from memories that you don't know you have. Art builds on art; it doesn't build on the individual. And no one is without influence. Every time you look at a piece of art, subconsciously you are influenced; either you reject it or you accept it. And it's an influence even if you reject it; I mean it is setting up a barrier and you say, "I will not do it this way."

So this is a long chain from, I suppose, man's very earliest beginnings, that you have everything behind you to select from. It's like going into a cafeteria. You can pick anything you want, or you can reject everything, but it's your choice. And it doesn't just begin with you. I mean I think there is an influence even if you reject it. You have Renaissance paintings and Egyptian wall paintings and Chinese calligraphy, and the artist coming into it today can look at all these things and say, "I don't like any of it," but this rejection is part of it.

I think whether you accept or you reject, you don't do it by yourself; you're part of a large cosmic thing that is doing art. Even those people who don't do art are part of it because looking at it, the clothes they select, the selection process is a visual thing and they either accept or reject.

When the hippies came along and rejected standard business clothes and what was acceptable at that time by the fashion magazines and went out and looked around the world and picked up ethnic clothing and put all these impossible things together, they were making an esthetic decision that influenced what is being worn today. There is no doubt about it that wearable art wouldn't have occurred if the hippies hadn't said, "Look at all this wonderful stuff out here." And they created an esthetic decision by what they selected to put on.

This is why I think that art doesn't exist just in one area. You aren't a fiber artist or you aren't a potter; you are an artist, just on this business of acceptance and rejection.

Creativity, Stimulation, and Freedom

Nathan: This is what we're looking for: how does art develop, how do people become artists, how do they find they can produce?

Are you suggesting that an artist needs to keep looking and experiencing?

Westphal: Yes. I think art is very much a record of culture, of time and culture. I doubt that we could ever have anyone who only existed in a black room with no contact with other people, no contact with anything in the environment. Would that person be anything but a closed box?

Nathan: Sensory deprivation experiments seem to support that idea.

Westphal: Yes.

I have to discuss this now with my friend Emmy Werner, who is a psychologist who teaches at Davis. We have a wonderful and rare friendship which came out of her need for transportation and my need for not driving alone back and forth to Davis. I didn't particularly know her, so someone suggested to me that maybe I could transport her because she was always having to hunt for rides, and we discovered we lived a few blocks from each other.

So now I think I have a good feeling for child development, the course that she teaches, because very often she would practice on the way up to Davis in the car. She would be going over her notes, and Emmy is a great talker who also tells a very good story. I think she's part of the school where it's important to make it a good story. And we have had a marvelous time discussing all sorts of things applying to how people become artists, what the psychology is behind this, how children react.

She's very interested in cross-cultural studies of children, not only in their physical growth but also their mental growth and how they perceive things. She has told me marvelous stories about African children, how they perceive space in relationship to how children in the United States perceive space and how Navajo Indian children perceive space. I think it's Navajo; it isn't Navajo, it's the cradle-board children. Children who are bound down evidently have a different space perception than children who are allowed to move freely. I mean these things are all very interesting, and they apply to how we learn art too.

Nathan: Do you get into creativity with her?

Westphal: To a certain extent, yes.

This was a wonderful thing about teaching at Davis in this Applied Behavioral Sciences department. I met people that I would have never met any other time in my life. I met psychologists. I met people interested in agriculture. I certainly met the Native Americans and I met the Asians. And I met people who were working with animals, in testing of animals from this human development thing. It was this whole mix. I could give something to them about art and design, and they gave me something about their fields, and it was a marvelous, reciprocal thing. I miss the colleagues I had at Davis and I miss this contact with all these people.

I think when you say this business of "creativity," what immediately comes to mind is the discussions I had on creativity with Mary Regan who teaches up on the Davis campus and has done a lot of studies on this theme, mainly with university students, I think. It's on creativity-- I don't know exactly, but she asks them great multitudes of questions to get profiles on their backgrounds and how they change over their period of time in their behavior and their thought about myths and structure of society. These things were very important.

This really was a good period, but of course the period I'm in now is marvelous because I have time to talk to Ed. We spend a great deal of time talking about our work, what we're doing, the world, everything. And this period since I retired has been much more relaxed for me. I feel I can work on my own thing or not, whatever. The pressure isn't there and it's wonderful.

Nathan: So this freedom that you prize so highly is at hand now?

Westphal: Yes, it's at hand and I dislike having that freedom interrupted by my saying yes. I don't want to go back to doing quilts. I want to go on fastening little pieces of wire and pieces of metal or strings and paper dog masks [laughing] and all the things that seem to be going on right now.

Nathan: Interestingly enough, the samurai experience, let's say, was stimulated by a request. But you were free to either accept or reject, of course.

Westphal: Yes, but that was a very free choice. I just had to use some materials in this box. The samurai wasn't part of it, and before that occurred I had been working on those papier-mâché dog masks.

Westphal: The dog masks were lying there when I was working on this Fiberarts Magazine thing. And I put them together and now, of course, all samurai warriors wear dog masks, as far as I'm concerned.

I look at the little postcards or photographs, and for some reason or other all these masks look like dogs. I look at them and I think, "Well, this could be black dogs." These things are all very dark and black and they all have a moustache on the mask, it's very important on this mask. And I realize that my next dog mask is going to have bristly moustache. This is all very important.

But basically I think I work not so much from the idea as from the actual manipulation of the materials. What I do results from what materials I'm using and how those materials work. It isn't me sitting down and willing it to happen.

When I was doing these samurai things I was laying strings on the table and interlocking them in various ways. I was putting metal discs in them, and suddenly I created a textile. I looked at this textile and I thought, "This looks like armor; this is laced together in the way that armor is." And then I began building them into the samurai figures. But first I started with the material, I manipulated that.

The same came with the dog masks. I was working with paper, doing newspaper and glue, and putting these things together, and suddenly I thought--I have this collection of ethnic masks on the wall--and I thought, "I can make a mask that looks like a dog and then I'll use this in a painting. The painting will be a normal painting, a painted surface, and then I will have a three-dimensional head sticking out of this. Then I would get away from this business of illusion of space, and I can actually bring in a three-dimensional object and have it contrast to a very flat surface. And I will get a tension between the three-dimensional and the flat." Then one thing leads to another, and of course I don't know where it's going to go tomorrow.

I have a feeling that these things are getting more surrealistic, more impossible things are going to be happening. I don't particularly look at them that way, but Monique Lévi-Strauss was here looking at paisley shawls a week ago. Monique and I were sitting on the floor looking at these shawls and talking about the pattern and the changes in the pattern, which was absolutely fascinating getting a completely different viewpoint. Her viewpoint

Westphal: is different than I would have ever looked at these things. She has it tied in very much to history and when these motives occurred and all sorts of things.

I look at it from a completely different standpoint. I think she was absolutely fascinated when I pointed out that there was a mistake in the design in one of them, as I mentioned earlier. I said, "See?" and then I found a mistake in one twice, and we looked and we discovered the mistake had been continued.

More on Samurai Dogs

Westphal: But getting around to the point, suddenly she said, "And what are you working on?" By this time I felt sort of reassured with her and so I went upstairs and brought one of the samurai figures down, the one that you saw, and she looked at this thing and she said to Ed, "It's very surrealistic." It hadn't occurred to me that this was what people would interpret.

Then I have one that does not have a head on it, and I looked at it and I thought, "It has to have a head; it seems incomplete now without the dog head." Ed was photographing these things and he said, "You know, I think maybe the dog head is more interesting than the rest of it." So I continue with the dog now, and they don't look as good without the dog head. So maybe now they're going to be dog heads and very little costume. I don't know where it's going, but it's going.

Nathan: I saw that frame that supports the samurai figure. Do you call that an armature, or is that not the right word?

Westphal: Well, I'll tell you what it is: it's a tomato frame turned upside down. But I have other sections of this particular one. [showing materials] This is going to be a star-spangled samurai.

Nathan: How gorgeous that is! Star-spangled samurai.

Westphal: I have some stars of this diffraction mylar that I have used down here, and they are going to be applied on this. This is a lower section, but I just love that mylar that comes in.

Nathan: You know, it looks Aztec.

Westphal: Now, don't get me off on this. [laughter] It can't be Aztec; this is a samurai. But, you see, it didn't occur to me until I started putting that material and then something wonderful was happening with this.

Nathan: And are these copper?

Westphal: They're copper strips. They're from that Fiberarts Magazine box, and I have no idea what they are. I've used them a lot.

Nathan: But what that does.

Westphal: But just weaving that in has suddenly given me a feeling of what the rest of this thing is going to look like.

Nathan: It is just radiant.

Westphal: Simplifying the color, I think, has given great emphasis to what is going on in here. The others go over a large range of color, but this one is going to be mainly just red, white, and blue, with the copper strips and then this mylar which is going to occur in these little star shapes that I fastened on.

Nathan: And what are these cordlike things? Have you braided them?

Westphal: No, it's just a very heavy synthetic yarn. Actually, I think people make rugs out of them.

Nathan: And then this little thin cord.

Westphal: That's a shoelace and that was all part of the Fiberarts package. The red and blue was not part of it. There was a white cotton mop in the Fiberarts package which I took apart and I was using those white cords as this section that I wove through the copper. But now I don't have the restriction of the Fiberarts box and so I can go into our huge supply of materials and hunt around and find something there.

This diffraction mylar, this strip of material, is something that I have had for a long time. I got a little sample of this through the mail up at Davis and I was so entranced with it that I ordered some and it's been sitting around in a little box in the storeroom for some time. I've used it to make some baskets. I did some baskets with a looping technique, so they reflect light in many, many directions. They're sort of little compact things like shells, but they give out all this light. As the sun gets on it, it gets very glowing.

Nathan: Is that why it's called "diffraction," because the light is broken up?

Westphal: I don't know. It's what they put on cars, bumper strips and strips around that low-riders put on their cars to make them flashier.

Nathan: It's gold on one side and silver on the other.

Westphal: And then it has all these little rainbows that come through it. It does something wonderful.

A couple of years ago we were in Banff. Ed was doing a guest appearance at the school of art up there. The gift shop in the basement of the building had strips of stars of mylar. So I bought some of these. While I was occupying my time I did a little book--you know, one of these little artist's books--about visiting Glacier. And I used parts of this mylar, these little stars, in this little book. It's a combination color Xerox and glued-on stars. A tiny, little book about dancing on a glacier.

I've absolutely been fascinated with this material, but I never could really find anything too much to do with it, but I do have these materials. So every once in a while it pops out, and just putting those strips in, I wanted something a little brighter in it than just this repetition of the red and the blue, so I dragged out this stuff and put it through. Well, then suddenly I remembered those stars and now this is going to be a star-spangled samurai. I like the play on words.

Nathan: Yes. Uncle Samurai?

Westphal: Yes, Uncle Samurai. [laughter] And maybe this will be the whole clue, this thing that you have said: Uncle Samurai. Maybe this will be the kind of helmet that Uncle Samurai wears. I don't know. But it will be interesting to see where it goes.

This is what I'm saying, that these things aren't planned out and they go one step at a time until suddenly I think I can't go any farther. Then I put a garbage bag over it and set it away and then drag it out a little later and look at it again.

Nathan: You do accumulate materials that look interesting; have you been doing this for a long time?

Westphal: Yes, unfortunately. Right now I'm in a period when I am absolutely not going to buy anything new to work with unless it is so wonderful that I can't resist it, because things are getting out of hand. I have every possible storage space jammed with objects that I have made, that Ed has made. We have materials all over the place and it's getting to the point it's a little bit ridiculous. You know, why does one have to be such an idiotic consumer?

I used to laugh at [Winfield Scott] Wellington with his passion for buying everything. In his house and his apartment you just had a little aisle that he moved through, through objects and boxes. And here I am, doing exactly the same thing. I had this marvelous example that this wasn't the way one could live, and here I'm doing it myself. I don't know where you draw the line. Because if I stop buying this stuff it won't be available and then I won't be doing anything and I don't think I'll be happy if I'm not doing anything. The little hands have to keep busy. And it goes on constantly.

Some Satisfactions

Nathan: I wondered whether there were any particular works, shows, or writings that you are especially pleased with, where you feel that it all came together, or might have been a favorite?

Westphal: Well, I think this first part of this thing I did at Vienna about wearable art, that is something that I have written, and I feel very pleased with the way that came out, and more often it's little things. I've written a little thing about standing on the tip of the pyramid, this to me is good.

And I like the public lecture that I did at Fiberworks on Monet's garden, on commitment. To me, that really came off. I felt I was able to start, and, you know, did a circle in thought. Unfortunately, the projector broke down, so I never could show the last six slides, which were such a buildup and such a climax. You know, you plan, but then it doesn't quite happen. But I was very happy about that.

Exhibits, I don't know about this because I guess I'm never happy with what it is really. I'm always critical. It could be better, it could be different, it could be displayed in a different way, there are always changes that I want to make. I would like exhibits to be much more spontaneous, that when you have something

Westphal: that you're excited about, there would be a place to take it and put it and somebody else would look at it, and you would get some feedback in that way. Now, everything gets planned so long in advance. It's more than two years in advance, and you have to be awfully important to show anything. You have to make sure it's really serious, it can't be just something playful and whimsical.

This is interesting. Playful and whimsical. The samurai things are getting playful and whimsical. That Fiberarts Magazine is out, but it hasn't reached the West Coast yet.

Nathan: I'm eager to see that.

Westphal: But we didn't know it had been out, and we got a letter from an artist in Alabama who was just elated with this thing and said, "Why, it was just like talking to you people," and so excited. He had a copy, so then I thought, "Well, it's strange that they haven't sent us one." And they haven't sent any yet. I'm sure they will eventually. Then somebody else mentioned that their copy had come through the mail, and they liked it. So then I went down to Straw Into Gold, this is just two days ago. I went down there because I don't subscribe to the magazine, I buy the issues when there's something in it that I like.

It's been a magazine that I feel has been very irregular, and usually look at it, but too much of it in the past has been toward hobby and toward selling, and I wasn't particularly interested in this. Recently they have a new policy and now they have a new editor, and the magazine is much improved. The color photographs are together. They'd be out of register most of the time before, and it used to drive me wild trying to focus my eyes to get the things to focus, and then I'd realize it's impossible, it's out of register. You know, you pull it back and you think, "My glasses aren't fitting me anymore," something, and then you realize it's out of register.

So I went down to buy it. Well, it hadn't come to the store yet, for sale, but they had an advance copy that they have had for several weeks and it's very dog-eared, so they gave that to me, so I do have a copy.

Then yesterday I got a phone call from a gallery in New York and the woman just loved this article.

Nathan: . That's exciting.

Westphal: They liked this little thing with the dog mask on it. Well, this is interesting because here is this whimsy that people are now being able to let exist. It isn't static and it's something that, you know, can happen. It doesn't happen easily. I mean it doesn't happen without time, but somehow I have the courage now to put this stuff together that is being really, I think, funny. I don't care if it's kitschy, you see. I have suddenly gotten to this point that it can be terribly wild and terribly kitschy, and your reputation isn't at stake, you know. I don't have to worry about this.

Nathan: What a wonderful freedom to have achieved.

Westphal: I think maybe-- I don't know, I hope I can carry this off, you know, because I think this is good. I don't have to worry about filling out that Bio-bib for the University anymore. All the time I was teaching I was always filling this out because this all goes in with the application for research. In fact, the exhibition record was probably stronger the year I got rejected than it had been before. But now I don't have to fill that out.

Somebody called last night and they wanted something, and I said, "No, I don't want to give you some wearable art for your event. I don't like it to be worn in a fashion show. I don't think that that's what I'm doing." And this woman said to me, "I will tell you the names of the other artists that are willing to do this." I said, "That doesn't make any difference. I don't care what they want to do with their art, I don't want to do it with mine."

Nathan: Yes, it is clear that you know what you want to do with your art. This was true of the dolls' jumpsuits and handmade stick furniture, your adventurous teaching, the painting-like quilts, the samurai armor, and the kimonos of handmade paper appreciated in America and Japan alike. Thank you for the insights, the candor, and the generosity of these interviews, and the wonderful images that make the good story.

APPENDICES

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Appendix A

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Crafts Tomorrow
World Crafts Council Conference 1980
Vienna, Austria

Katherine Westphal
July 30, 1980

Introduction

The committee in charge of planning for the World Crafts Conference in Vienna 1980 noted that artists/crafts people in the United States seemed to be turning their attention from object making for exhibitions to the creation of art to be worn by people. It was decided to present "wearable art" as the American Craft Council's contribution to the 1980 International Conference whose theme is Crafts Tomorrow.

In attempting to represent artists and their ideas I contacted over 150 artists working on wearable art. I did not define it. I only asked for slides, identification and a statement. I hoped to discover what these artists interpreted as wearable art. This group of artists was recommended to me by galleries and museum directors in various parts of the United States. In addition I asked for slides from artists from Northern California whose work was known to me.

The response was excellent. Artists from Canada invited by the Canadian Crafts Council also chose to send slides. This material was chosen from over 1,000 slides and approximately 100 statements. It represents what people are thinking, what they are doing as wearable art and of course it represents my selection. Someone else would make a different selection and derive a different message. To me the information is significant because of the free boundaries in thought, in experimentation and in sensitivity to materials. Perhaps the art of tomorrow will not be in galleries but on people creating a constantly moving, changing work of art.

Art to Wear

I think it all began with an apple, many centuries ago.

If you know what wearable art is, you do not need to listen to this. If you do not know what wearable art is after hearing this you still may not know what wearable art is.

Think of clothing in a new way.

It is not a replacement for the fig leaf.

The decorative can become functional: the functional can become decorative. The shoe is not just to walk in. The hat is not just to keep your head warm or to keep the sun out of your eyes.

Wearable art is not fashion and it is not necessarily a marketable item.

Wearable art
 moves through the environment
 interacts with people
 constantly changes

It can express an idea
 of motion
 of solidity
 of effervescence
 of transparency
 of glitter
 of crud
 of pattern

or none of the above.

It can express a mood
 of sorrow
 of joy
 of fear
 of hate
 of pride
 of love
 of despair

or none of the above.

It tells us of humanity, who we are, where we are, who we would like to be, our dreams, our fantasies, our realities. It is an adjunct to the person, gentle or flamboyant.

The wearer can become a part of the landscape
 can become a tree
 can become a tall building
 can become a fish in the sea
 can become an oil spill
 can become an ancient princess.

Wearable art can tell a story like a comic strip or like a bas relief on an ancient wall. The story can be encyclopedic, poetic, narrative, or journalistic or it can have no story at all. The image recognizable or not can wrap around the human form and discovering its message is like traveling through a maze, a wonderful maze of many turns, many vistas. Finding one's way from beginning to end is not important but to see, to enjoy, to understand

the play on ideas
 the play on words
 the play on forms
 the play on materials
 the play on play.

It is art moved out of the gallery onto the street. It moves the man or woman into a painting. This painting performance becomes the changing, moving, growing art in the street. The walls of the gallery are replaced by man and woman. They move, they change, the forms change. The performance becomes a spontaneous combination of the colorful, the decorative, the bizarre

in new situations
 in impossible situations
 in aggressive situations
 in rejected situations.

There is a new audience, an audience exposed to art without going into the citadel of the elite, the gallery or museum. It is for all to enjoy or reject. It is there.

The boundaries are loose but the integrity, the clean discipline of the artists is solid. These artists break barriers of rigid craft disciplines. They form their own parameters for their work. Many explain their ideas verbally, others believe the work speaks for itself. A theme which runs through their work is a debt to the past, to cultures other than their own. Susan Ninger of Seattle, Washington, an artist involved in performance, says, "My imagery is gathered from many sources, primarily from forms found in various cultures, past and present. Basically, I tend to keep my eyes and my mind open for images and ideas which are in some way fascinating, strange, or amusing, and then I try to relate them to my fascination and infatuation with costume."

Pat Hickman of Berkeley, California, is more specific in her source both in process and its form. "This body of work is a response to his skin-like material, to Eskimo and other traditional textiles. It's a personal, visual way of holding onto the memory a bit longer of an earlier piece or idea which has mattered to me. In this way, a moment of mine has connected with the past and responded---a continual wondering about past and present and my own time." The "gutwork" of Pat Hickman has evolved from a first tiny parka closely resembling an Eskimo parka in an anthropology museum to the freer translation of gutwork in a Victorian fascinator or the Turkish bloomers. It mixes time, materials, and cultures to create a new vision.

This new vision exploded my senses about ten years ago when Frances Butler of Berkeley, California appeared at a party in her first coat resplendent in poster color and geometric patterns and zany imagery recalling the Japanese kimono of the Edo period. The graphic message is the primary mark of her work today. It speaks for itself with images old

and new, the printed word and patterns.

Other artists recycle, adding new ideas or materials to old, much worn bits of our industrial output. Joan Steiner of New Brunswick, New Jersey says, "I will use anything and I hoard everything--scraps of fabric, the pieces of anything that breaks." John Eric Broaddus, an artist living in New York City, uses his wearable art in performance. "I get most of my materials, including the fabrics, from the streets and all of my pieces have been worn in the streets, discos, and galleries in New York. I enjoy using found materials for the recycling value and evolution of ideas, not to mention economics. America's garbage is its Gold."

Theo Janson of Toronto, Canada says, "When I have the opportunity to make a piece of one-of-a-kind jewelry I will often turn to several large tins of what the artistic community recognizes as found objects, but what I suppose almost anyone else would call junk. There are charms, miniatures, odd bits and pieces--the glass eyes from a doll named Alex, a miniature lead tiger cage, watch interiors and animal bones. The only things they have in common are their small size and the fact that every one recommended itself so highly to me that I kept it. I sort and arrange them into small groupings that are then mounted in silver."

Faith Porter, a sculptor from Los Angeles, California, makes transparent casings for the human body. This glass and lucite is recycled bits of a discarded chandelier, lucite tubing, and buttons, becoming a sculpture called "Person in a Glass House." She says, "So many beautiful things go unnoticed in our disposable society. I choose to search out things most people see as useless or impossible and isolate them in a meaningful way."

This organization becomes a primary force in the artist's vision. Elizabeth Coleman of New York is talking about primitives and their sense of order when she says, "Placing one color next to another and one form upon another is how my wearable items evolve. The materials know what they should do. The artist is someone who knows how to listen." Dina Knapp of Florida writes, "Someone looked at my recent work and commented, 'It's like a Samurai gone wild.' In the past I felt my techniques were too tight. I had to get that tightness out of my system in order to realize the kind of freedom I'm after--freedom of process, for example, using the sewing machine as a tool that is an extension of myself rather than a rigid machine; freedom in terms of openness of imagery; freedom of time and of space."

The machine becomes part of the artist in his personal manipulation of its function. Susanna Lewis of Brooklyn, New York says, "I am in love with my principal tool--the knitting machine--and am always pushing and exploring new ways to use it." Gaza Bowen makes shoes, glorious shoes of many materials. These shoes function as shoes, "My shoe making techniques are an odd blend of 18th century methods with 20th century materials and advancements. Most of my tools are fifty to one hundred years old."

Paula Lishman of Blackstock, Ontario, Canada, is involved with preserving the environment. She says "Our objectives are to sustain an energy-conserving, non-polluting environment. In this country, it is cheaper to insulate our bodies than heat our houses. If this can be achieved with a body art consciousness, why not? This craft was initiated by myself about three years ago. It involves in simplest terms, cutting the pelt of an animal spirally around the circumference to obtain a long strip of fur yarn. This is combined with various materials to make leather trimmed, thermal, double faced garments. We have changed the fur from a pelt to a fabric."

Ellen Hauptli of New York uses fabrics pleated by machine. The form becomes sculptural through a partial construction and folding of the garment before it is pleated. Then the machine takes over and pleats--not endless yardage, but a single garment that is then manipulated into a sculptural form by Ellen. Its form will change again and again as the wearer chooses. It is the essence of movement and change. As fabric is pleated, it runs through the machine with a sheet of translucent paper. For Ellen Hauptli this paper also becomes wearable art. Exciting, provocative in form, embodying sound and creating art which lasts a moment and then is only a memory in the mind or an image on a photographic film. The idea appeals to the ecologically minded -- freeing our world from the clutter of junk.

Edward Alan Turvey of Ontario, Canada believes that photography is now a pure art of the 20th century, and can be used to create instant real life paintings, to motivate and stimulate the viewer. His work is involved with study of the urban savage of the future. This "urban savage" is based upon his belief. "I feel the western civilization will crumble in the near future. Technology will disappear as a result of educational breakdowns and as a result of total chaos and social anarchy, blood will run everywhere. Survival of the fit only. Primitive animal instincts will motivate mankind."

Other artists are involved with social change. Visually commenting on its absurdity with comic strip form for decoration on jackets is Sharon Caldwell of Oregon. The titles of pieces tell about the breadth of her views, "The Westernizing of China" or "Don't Treat Your Puppy Like a Dog," a comment on the state of the world in 1980, or a modern day red jogging suit, "Miss Hood and the Wolf." It is calling attention to the turmoil in our lives without predicting our demise. Julie McNair, a metalsmith, lives in Wyoming and reacts to her environment, "The only consistent factor in my work is humor. I have been poking fun at institutions and mores for years. My spur series is attacking Art of the 'West' and the Fads of the 'East.'" Wyoming has a small population with a culture all its own. A great place to live but very frustrating for your typical avant-garde artist."

A ceramicist and dancer, Michael Biello from Philadelphia, an urban center in the "East" says, "I have two loves, one is dance and one is clay. I create masks in clay and work them into ceremonial performance pieces. All my masks are made from people I know. They are the spirit/ images of people I care for."

Mysticism is the philosophy behind the works of Penelope Fried of Fairfax, California. "I endeavor to explore the hidden and mysterious relationships between disassociated objects, the irrational becoming concrete, as it were. I tend to map the course and then move aside to become the audience as a result."

To a certain extent we all become the audience to our own work, understanding and observing all those nuances of perception that make the maze a sense of continuing enlightenment--the possibility of the artist to grow--to be interested in the next project while still remembering the last.

The Artist Speaks

Wearable art is
to K. Lee Manuel:

"It is my way of communicating my very intense love of life and spiritual search."

to Cuca of Los Angeles, California:

"Whatever the nature and visions and design experiments manifest in my work; I care very much to have my clothes worn and used; I demand that they be genuinely wearable and comfortable and durable."

to Kay-O-Wicks of Maine:

"Knitting a painting that someone can wear is to me a wonderful combination of two very necessary human needs, art and clothing."

to Carleigh Hoff of Los Angeles, California:

"I share my dreams and fantasies through costume: a living sculpture of previously unknown form upon the known and familiar human body."

to Mimi Shulman of Toronto, Canada:

"I consider my pieces to be communications of very personal feelings. Some feelings of romance and sentimentality such as the room and the medals. Some pieces represent frustrations, fears made light and humorous."

to Mona Costa of New York City:

"I like to think that in my work I go beyond the third dimension, beyond perspective, beyond depth. It is a desire to add a new realm, a new intensity that is not really in the things but in the being--and that is the dream. To deck out the universe in shadows and scintillations."

to D'Arcie Beytebiere of Seattle, Washington:

"Art should be an everyday thing and one way to make it that is to wear it."

From all this we know a great deal about how the artists think, but very little visually about the objects they make. In making this survey, I have found certain regional differences. When I asked for material no definition of wearable art was made. It was interpreted in the United States generally as fiber, perhaps because I am a fiber artist. From Canada wearable art slide contributions were mainly jewelry. Both in Canada and the United States certain characteristics as to concept were constant: Assemblage, recycling, performance came from the urban settings, Toronto, New York, Los Angeles and Seattle. In areas with cold climates--the eastern seaboard of the United States and Canada--knitting, crocheting, felting were explored. The Pacific Coast reflected the Asian influence in Japanese techniques of printing, painting and dyeing fabric and the use of the rectangular method of garment construction--the kimono style. Everywhere almost without exception there was a mixture of materials, of patterns, of images. The objects were dense, clearly saying more is more. The boundaries are loose, and individuality is rampant. If this is a projection of our future, it will be colorful. Henry Miller, the writer, expounded a philosophy of unstructured individualism and full maturation of fantasy and personality. This is the message of these artists of Wearable Art: Dreams, fantasies, and private realities.



Appendix B

ABOUT VENICE, TEXTILES, AND FORTUNY

Where and when did all this quest for information about the name Fortuny start? It keeps reoccurring in my memory. In the late 1930's as an art student in college I heard the name Fortuny in relation to printed fabrics. It made very little impression, as I recall now, the whole concept seemed old fashioned. It was a recreation of something old, the fabrics did not seem contemporary, not modern. Like most nineteen year olds of that period I was conscious only of the flat-hard geometric patterns of silk-screened textiles. I was fascinated by the machine or the near machine, with the ideology of the Bauhaus. The contemporary was so glowingly indoctrinated into the students of the 30's by the college professors of the 30's. We were all on the edge of a brave new world. A world where all our needs would be solved by technology.

In California as a college student I was unaware of the plight of the Bauhaus, of the exodus of those change makers from Weimar to Dessau and then from Germany to escape the suppression of their belief in change. In comparison to the work of the Bauhaus, Fortuny fabrics seemed part of the establishment. There was no sense of history in me. I was embracing the new or what I thought was new, a complete break with tradition.

I studied art history, but art history was something unrelated to me as an individual. It was art as slides, as photographs in books, or as objects in museums. It was something far removed from me, something I would never experience. I did not even imagine that one day I would climb the Acropolis or stand in the Forum in Rome. Travel was costly and completely apart from the student of the Depression years. It was unthinkable.

My art history teachers were good. They did not emphasize dates or rigid memory exercises but philosophical concepts. I still remember discussions of the Winged Victory, the problem of flight and the relationship to Greek thought of the time, but that Winged Victory did not live for me. It was a slide. It was a plate in a book. I wonder now if I even knew it was in Paris. So it was with Fortuny, it did not live for me. Fortuny was just a name to be filed away, information gathered and stored away somewhere up there in that marvelous information filing system we call the brain.

The Bauhaus concept or ideals were something else. They seemed more of my time. The enthusiasm of my teachers enabled me to really experience some of these aesthetic beliefs. In Southern California a group of architects practicing "the less is more" philosophy were building. I saw the clean cut, simple houses. One of my teachers lived in one. Another professor had dining chairs made by Marcel Breuer. These people had experienced these things in Germany in the early 30's and brought back memories or objects of their personal involvement. Their belief became

my belief. It seemed living and I had really experienced it not by eyes alone. I had moved through an uncluttered "designed for living" house. I had sat in a Breuer chair, felt the spring of the steel, felt the tension of the sling seat and back. The design was new. It was change. I embraced it.

I could only relate to the Fortuny textile as something reminiscent of the coverings of those upholstered chairs which I was so busy rejecting. I was not conscious of the difference, only the similarity, in much the same way as my students today would reject a decorator swatch of a Fortuny textile. I rarely show examples or speak of Fortuny; perhaps in anticipating their reaction I cheat them of an experience.

About four years later as a graduate student in the University I started reading Proust's Remembrance of Things Past. There was that name again. The description of the Fortuny dress from Venice. Somewhere in the library at Berkeley I found a photograph of one of those dresses. It too was rejected, not contemporary, not anything. It was reminiscent of a Greek vase painting and that to me was pretty dead. It was a classification from slides of Attic geometric or Red or Black Figures. It didn't live for me any more than other art history material. I admired the painting skill on the pots but I felt the forms were ugly as form. I had never held a Greek pot in my hands or felt the thinness of the walls or observed the fine polished surface of slip painting. Greek vases were only photos or slides. At that time, it was not a part of a living culture for me. It was dead.

These are my early first memories of Fortuny and my reactions. It seems important to record them. Now we jump a whole span of years. Air travel has made it possible to really experience those art history slides and photographs in books and museums. I have confronted the Winged Victory at the top of a wide flight of stairs at the Louvre in Paris. I have carefully touched the marble and noted its waxiness, its coolness and its slightly creamy color. I know what she looks like from the back. I have seen the rough spots where sections are broken off. I have climbed the steps of the Acropolis in the blazing sun and sat in the shade of the columns of the Parthenon. I have leaned over the railing next to the bronze horses on San Marco and listened, and watched the clock across the square, its moving figures striking the large bell and scattering pigeons in swirling clouds over a piazza packed with people.

Art history has come alive for me. It has become part of my history too through experience and actual contact with the art and with the people. I can recognize the link with the present people and the people of the past who created this art as part of their way of life. It was as right for them to produce art as they did as it was for the men and women of the Bauhaus. Each notable time period or culture has been brought about by change. This is a change or modification in tradition

but not a complete break with tradition. Art does not spring full blown on the half shell like Venus from the sea but builds upon the art that has come before. It is part of a long, slow, changing tradition. Any innovation seems new, and when the change-making man touches his material the whole new cycle of change in art begins.

We respect past art for its history as part of its time. We accept it as a necessary step in a long series of mutations but we do not slavishly imitate. If we imitate, art dies. It is no longer what man, the artist, is about. The artist is the innovator, the change-maker, who never remains static. A Bauhaus solution of 1925 produced today is as dead as the production of the Winged Victory today. Our artists of the original Bauhaus produce very different solutions today than they did in the 1920's in Weimar. They are still involved with change; to produce the same solution would be unthinkable. They are not the same people. They have grown, technology has grown, society has changed. A mutated answer is required to solve the problem.

Back to Fortuny

About five years ago I started teaching design at the University of California at Davis. In looking through a storage room I opened an unmarked drawer. It was full of Fortuny textiles. I pulled them out, and one by one examined each one trying to analyze the process. This time these textiles spoke to me. They were swatches of the Fortuny decorator fabrics. I could ignore the eclecticism. I could be tolerant of the tyranny of the repeat. There was something else here. It was not the pure mechanical quality of the roller print or silk-screened textile. There was a sensitivity between texture of cloth and color shape. Although the design was in mathematical repeat there were small variations which suggested a hand process. Both sides were interesting and they seemed to be printed on both sides of the fabric. The textiles had a mellowness that age gives old fabrics in museum collections.

Time does great things for textiles. It mellows them, it makes them loved. This is all part of an attitude of our time. Our young people love blue jeans, but not the hard perfect quality of new blue jeans but the old mellowed quality. They hasten this process by sanding the surface, dropping bleach or dye on them, ripping them and patching them to give the blue jeans a sense of history. This is what the Fortuny textiles were saying to me that day five years ago. The Fortuny textiles had a sense of history. They also had a debt to history. Their patterns were borrowed from woven Renaissance textiles but they were printed, and printed to look old and worn and loved. They seem precious, a thing of value, to be cherished. This new fabric had a sense of timelessness, a sense of history. The opening of a drawer led me to a search to make Fortuny alive for me.

At this time all I knew of Fortuny was this drawer full of fabrics. I knew little more than the name Fortuny and that some bits and pieces of dresses existed in collections in the San Francisco Bay area. The library had a brief article in The Architectural Review magazine from March 1965. It described a Fortuny studio in Venice. I had known of the existence of the factory in Venice; admittance was supposedly impossible. Suddenly I felt I had missed something vital. I had been to Venice three or four times. The factory and the studio were there and I had been unaware. Perhaps I had walked by those studio windows or floated past on the water. The magical city that so captured my imagination was also the city where Fortuny textiles were produced. In vain I tried to decipher from the descriptive bits of the article and from a map just where in Venice this studio was located.

About a year later in 1967 the Los Angeles County Museum had a Fortuny exhibition. It was not just the decorator fabrics. It was all the bits and pieces that remained. It included a large collection of dresses, swatches of old textiles, pieces of those actual textiles printed by Mariano Fortuny, his paintings, his studio furniture, a leaded faceted window from the house. The exhibition tried to recapture the environment that surrounded Mariano Fortuny, the artist. As usual with a museum installation one could not touch, only the visual was presented to the viewer. Even that was made more remote by glass and roped off areas and dim light. The magicianship of Fortuny was apparent, that use of printing methods that seemed to make the textile have a history, a mellowness that age alone seems to give. Many of the textiles were further embellished with gold or silver. Those metallic surfaces were so subtly applied that age seemed to have played a part in making even a mechanical repeat take on variation in the worn and rubbed metallic sheen.

At one time the Fortuny dresses that seemed mere imitations of a painting on a Greek pot now seemed to be alive in the sheerness of the silk, in the way it covered the form of the manikin, in the way it obscured or revealed the form beneath. One could think how contemporary these dresses would appear on a live uncorseted woman of 1968. These dresses could not have been meant to be worn over anything but skin. These manikins had all the underpinnings of 1910 with properly engineered pinches and bulges. I wonder if this is the way the women of 1910 wore Fortuny dresses. What did Mme. de Guermentes wear under her Fortuny gown? Is it possible that Proust is indicating that the Fortuny gown was worn only over skin when he says the dress did not prevent me from thinking of the woman? The details of closings at neck, arms, and sides, of buttons and loops are reminiscent of the drawing on the Greek pot and yet completely functional on the present garment. The material, its use, its drape, its crystal pleating seemed a miracle. The detail of hem edge finish with a crystal bead every three or four inches causes the bottom edge to have the ripple of the drawing on the black figured vase. After seeing the Los Angeles exhibition, I wanted to know more about Mariano Fortuny, to see that environment in Venice, to try to understand the man and his work.

Mariano Fortuny at the time he was working in Venice before 1920 was the artist in charge of the Titian paintings, exhibitions and restoration. According to the brochures, he had studied painting in Spain, sculpture in Paris, architecture in Rome and chemistry and dyes in Germany. Then the brochure goes on to explain his finding of a bit of Greek cloth in excavations on Crete and Mycenae. This seems pretty improbable. G. Richter lists finds of Greek cloth in three locations, Crimea, Mongolia, and a site in Attica, the latter excavated in 1954. For ancient textiles to be preserved the burial conditions must be right. It must be a very dry climate, no rain. We have extensive textile finds from the dry rainless coast of Peru. We have textiles from the tombs in upper Egypt. To question this brochure statement is mere hairsplitting. What is important is the interest in an art form from another time and the inventiveness of Fortuny in trying to capture the essence of an ancient fabric on fabric.

This is the period when painting was the supreme form of expression, the status area for the artists of the early 20th century. At this same time or a little earlier there were rigorous groups dedicated to the minor arts working in England--William Morris, and in Germany--the Bauhaus. Somehow at the same time we have one man in Italy with a vision of printing fabrics capturing the patterns, textures, and patina of past woven fabrics, the velvets, the brocades of the 15th and 17th centuries in Florence and Venice. The power looms of the industrial revolution had fostered the imitation of the hand woven Renaissance patterns without the sensitivity to the form, the texture, the basic quality of these beautiful old handwoven brocades and velvets. The cheap imitation made possible by the machine gave rise to a multitude of covering uses: for draperies, overstuffed furniture, and clothing. It ran wild in imitation Renaissance pattern.

But Fortuny was printing fabric, not weaving it. He was transferring his sensitivity and skill as a painter to another field, to printing fabrics. This is where the innovation lies, the change; he was no longer satisfied with the poorly imitated woven fabric. He tried producing his own vision of those old fabrics not by weaving but by printing to capture that quality that was to him so mysterious in a bit of old Renaissance brocade. His skill in painting, his knowledge of dye chemistry, and his aesthetic values showed in the sensitivity with which the designs were produced. They had a quality similar to the woven textile. They were produced in small quantities. Some were tinted as many as 18 times. At first he was producing about thirty meters a month, that's about a yard a day.

An early order was from the Carnavalet museum in Paris. After the installation there was clamour for more of these textiles, and also notice that this is the man who also produced those dresses so reminiscent of a drawing on a Greek pot. They were a deviation from the standard mode of the standard construction. To see the inner construction of an engineered

garment from the 1910-1920 period with its linings, stiffenings, darts, hooks, eyes, snaps and then to look at the simplicity of a Fortuny dress--that is just a length of silk pleated or a length of chiffon velvet printed in a gold motif--reveals the difference. For storage the pleated silk dress is rolled into a ball and put into its own small silk bag. Not hung on a rack. Is Fortuny anticipating a wardrobe for jet travel? These are all the marks of the innovator, which captured my interest.

As with an artist, you never know what will get you off into a new form, a new emphasis in your own work. That Fortuny exhibit spoke to me and suddenly I was out buying velveteen and working with other dyeing methods and I, too, was off on the quest for the romance of the past, a return to elegance in fabrics, a way to make a new textile seem old and loved. I wanted to recapture a part of history but without resorting to the old patterns, the imagery of the Renaissance, but to work with those images that were part of me and my world.

Those textiles I printed attracted the interest of Lee Nordness. He asked how all this started. When I told him the name of the textile, "the Fortuny dress," he asked the next question, "Of course, you have seen Fortuny in Venice?" At my answer of no, he said he could arrange it. It was all sort of the closing of a circle. I would be able to see where Fortuny worked and lived. Perhaps I could find what in that environment influenced the kind of textiles he produced. Eventually in 1970 I made that trip to Venice, saw the Fortuny palaccio on the island of Giudecca. I didn't find what I hoped to find but I found something else. I found what Fortuny is today and that too is important to art, to design, to the evolutionary change.

This is Fortuny Today--August 1970

We are staying at an hotel on the Lido. This is part of the magic of being in Venice, the water city. You can go everywhere by drifting across the water or you can walk on streets without fear of the car. We had decided on a previous trip--although it was great to be on the edge of the Grand Canal in a 16th century palace, to hear strange sounds in the night of supplies being brought into the city, or of refuse being taken out, the sound of the boatman as he rounded the corner from a small riva to the Grand Canal, the slap of the oars in the water--it was better not to be in Venice itself. Not to be enclosed by it but to be able to view it from a distance so it becomes almost a mirage surrounded by water.

The Lido enables you to arrive in Venice many times in one day. You get on the vaporetto at Santa Maria Elisabetta, settle inside or outside on the boat according to the sun and wind and slowly with several stops arrive in the center of Venice. As you start, visible over the water are the buildings of pink and grey and white, the San Marco Square. You remember the glowing domes of the church, the pigeons, the tourists, the

cameras, the vendors all merging into the splendors of reflections in the ever-present, ever-moving water.

So from the Lido, we begin our trip to Fortuny, a pleasant forty-five minutes of changing images, the stops each evoking a different kind of Venice. The Sant'Elena with its sparse pine woods and children playing soccer on the dry grass, to the lush green of the Giardini, with a helmeted lady on the back of a lion, all in gray marble, watching over the flags of the Biennale and the bronze, half-eaten woman sculpture on the landing stairs, to the austere tan and white beautifully symmetrical classic beauty of the building adjoining the naval academy, to the crowds milling around Santa Zaccaria, the gondoliers, the porticos of the Ducal palace, to the stop of San Marco where we thread our way down a narrow dock to change to the motor rapido that goes to San Giorgio and Giudecca via the canal with freighters and passenger cruise ships. Its all the changing scene of the water city, all part of the environment of Mariano Fortuny. But his time of living in Venice was different, a slower pace, less tourists and as remote from the Venice of today as the Fortuny of today is different from the Fortuny of Mariano Fortuny, the artist.

At the next to the last stop on the island of Giudecca we got off the rapido and walked along the embankment over cobbled pavement, up and over each bridge as its riva joined the canal. Past the pasta shops, the tobacco shops, the liquori, past the street dealers in fruits and vegetables, the fish merchants with their boxes of freshly caught tiny fish, squids, crayfish, mussels, all the sweepings of the Adriatic. The shops grew fewer, the embankment more deserted, buildings became poorer. Cats peered out of crevices in broken walls, windows were broken. Doors rattled unbolted and showed battered, boarded-up and uncared-for interiors. It seemed all wrong, this desolation, this poverty. Further down there were a few trees and the end of the embankment. This appeared to be one of the most poverty stricken areas of Venice, so poor, so broken down, so deserted. Even with its overcrowdedness, its poverty, Venice always seems visually rich. Being sure we had as usual miscalculated our direction we still continued and then at the very end of the embankment was an enormous double door with a small shined brass plate, inscribed "Fortuny." I pushed the bell, then there was a shout and much barking of dogs and with a few shuffling sounds the door swung open and a young man invited us in with a "prego avanti."

We were in a rather dark tunnel-like area with doors moving off to either side. A sunlit courtyard was visible behind the dark shape of the man. Two elegant sleek and jumping dogs were dancing around us, not seriously protecting but performing their act, pets rather than watchdogs. Here we ran into our first language barrier of the Fortuny venture but it was quickly solved with the appearance of a young English-speaking secretary who took over from the young man and the prancing dogs. She said that the Countess Gozzi had just gone to London. The Countess would be sorry to have missed us and she, the secretary, remembered my letter. After explaining that she could show us very little. The factory was

closed for the annual holiday. We could not be allowed in the factory anyway. The showroom was closed, the bolts of cloth wrapped but she would show us the compound. I believe she referred to it in this way.

We peered into a door to the left, a smallish room with shelves each with a wrapped bolt of cloth, a table and some chairs. Then we looked into another room all white with ironing tables, the black cords from the irons suspended vertically from the table surfaces, a coat tree hung with many dog leashes. Then we moved to the tiled courtyard with a great vine hanging with purple grapes on a trellis overhead. There was a well or fountain in the center. Next to an open doorway at the far side was a cage of canaries. One could hear voices of people from within the rooms. It was just about time to harvest the grapes and make the wine as they do every year. We then trailed our grey-clad secretary to the formal dining room. Its walls were covered with a Fortuny textile, gently when the surface was touched, it responded. The walls were not papered but upholstered with fabric. With a very special process the wall is prepared. Mounting strips are attached to the wall, then a layer of interlining flannel is stretched to the stripping. The actual Fortuny fabric covers this, lengths of fabric are sewn together and stretched to fit the fabric to the stripping.

A water stain was visible about a foot above the flooring. This was the height of the water during the floods. It seemed to add a mark of interest to the room, the slight discoloration of the metallic print seemed age marked. It was in keeping with the preciousness of the fabric, so valuable, so loved, it was preserved with its mark of water history instead of being replaced. The secretary casually mentioned the paintings on the walls. Carpaccio's "Four Seasons." As we went out the door into an entrance hall we passed an ancient glass mirror. "It's Renaissance like the one in the glass museum on Murano." Please do not mistake it, seemed to be implied, it is not a museum replica, but one knew immediately. The mirrored surface had the patina, the dark blobs and images of old mirrors. It did not have the brilliant unmarred surface of mirrors produced today. It was right for this building. It had a history, a memory of reflected images of other centuries.

We moved across shining floors to an entrance hall with a spiral staircase. "This is all new. The Countess Gozzi designed it. Spiral staircases were very unusual in Italy. It was very difficult to find workmen who were able to construct this type of staircase." It was beautiful and elegant. The entrance hall itself had polished marble floors and classical columns. The handrail was beautifully polished above the curvilinear design of the guard rail. The stairs were carpeted, the carpet carefully covered with a white cotton canvas held down with a brass rod at the back meeting of each tread and riser. One floated up the stairs. They were designed to make going up or coming down easy and elegant, the movement fit the mood of the room. The upper floors contained the private apartment of the Countess Gozzi and a guest suite.

Each had wall coverings of a different Fortuny fabric. Chairs were covered in Fortuny fabric. Windows were draped in Fortuny fabric. Beds were covered in Fortuny fabric. Each room had a completeness, a consistency in all details in keeping with the fabrics.

Back to the lower floor; we entered a large salon again with Fortuny textiles as wall coverings. The shining terrazzo floors reflecting the subtle Renaissance patterns, the delicate pasteled colors with the glint of metallic. We saw the large medallion repeats filling the back and seat of a chair. The perfection of the upholsterer was apparent in the centering of the pattern making it fit the back of the chair to become a unified whole--a rhythmic repetition of the forms of the chair. From there the five of us progressed to the garden veranda (we had been joined by the prancing dogs Bobo and Java) and heard about the dinner parties in the summer at the edge of the three acre garden.

We walked down neatly raked garden paths mid fruit trees, grass, and exotic and not so exotic flowers to the new heated pool just completed and modeled after the Palladian style. The facade of its changing rooms and kitchen so reminiscent in its symmetry and its classical form to the Palladian Venetian country houses. It was so like that pool at the Villa Maser, the villa that has the Veronese frescoes on the walls and ceilings, where space is confused and the eye is fooled. Are those people or paintings? They become so three dimensional. This pool was at the far end of the garden and as we walked down those paths, moving through a large garden, it seemed impossible that this was Venice. The city is so jammed together there seems only room for roof gardens or for plants on terraces. The only green one sees is in the Giardini, and under the trees at Sant'Elena or in the small terraces of a very few palaccios on the Grand Canal or on the outskirts of the Lido and the small islands out in the marshes.

There was a gardener's cottage, delightful and as big as a suburban house in California. It was formerly the changing rooms for the pool and is used now as a storage for the garden furniture. We moved through these gardens unbelieving their size, then we came to the factory itself with a long bank of frosted glass windows, all closed now in August. This whole compound is set between two large brick factory-like buildings unused at the present time except by cats and rats. "Former breweries" we were told "but unfortunately one needs good water to make good beer and everyone knows that Venice does not have good water." The workrooms are a large mystery. What goes on in these rooms? I could get no picture of the size of the operation. I could only look at the outside of a building with whitened windows. How many people worked inside? How much yardage was printed in a day? in a year? I could get no feeling of the activity inside. I did find out however that the cotton fabric used now and replacing the silks and velvets of Mariano Fortuny "was very difficult to obtain." It was long staple Egyptian cotton, very tightly woven, and came from only one source, Verona. Unfortunately because of the tight spin of the cotton there were flaws in the weave and a flaw in the basic unprinted cloth was also a flaw in the printed cloth. It was necessary to continue printing on the same kind of cotton.

Next we passed the summer kitchen with unfrosted windows. We could look inside an enormous, shining, white-tiled room. It seemed the size of an hotel kitchen. We were told "it was larger than most restaurant kitchens." Even this gave us no clue as to the number of workers in the factory. During the entire tour the secretary was hunting for the guest book. We then went into an office somewhere in the labyrinth of rooms, the smallest room we had entered by far. There was a clutter of mail and by this time Bobo and Java were enthroned on their beds, the wide leather collars giving the only different color and texture to their glistening fur. The guest book was never found.

Fortuny, the factory, the Palacina Gozzi had become for me a restored and loved and tended six acres, a life style. Its unpretentious exterior on a very rundown embankment was typical of Venice. We were told, "one only restores the interior, if you restore the exterior your taxes will rise. You are not free to remodel the exterior. It must be restored exactly. The interior you may change as you wish. It is our way." The interiors become lavish to be enjoyed by the invited; the exterior disintegrates.

The interior was restored or designed to an elegance, a grace of living, a life style that is expressed in the fabrics that are being produced today. The environment is right for the product. It is an environment far removed from most of the world today, the world that I live in and farther still from the world my students live in, their world of brotherhood, of social reform. These exist in the same world almost unaware of each other. I wonder if the world of Fortuny would know the significance of third world, meaningful relationship, soul? Could they accept the young for their lack of structure any more than the young could accept living in the life style of the Fortuny compound? The young may reject the Fortuny decorator fabric but these same young people would not eat, so they could buy a worn-out bit of Mariano Fortuny fabric or a gold stamped silk velvet coat or a crystal pleated dress. They might not know what or where they came from but they would appreciate the nostalgia of another era, the handmade look, the glory of the rag and if necessary some might have no qualms about stealing to possess.

There is an ambivalence in young people's knowledge of textiles. They see little difference between a beautiful historical textile, a museum treasure, and their amateurish attempt to tie-dye a tee shirt. These young people have an ability to use up and destroy those things which will never be produced again. Perhaps the greatest importance of Fortuny today is this very quality of preserving and maintaining an environment. It becomes a living life style not a museum. It is cherished by the Countess Gozzi, by her workers, by those few people who are fortunate enough to get beyond the large gates, the brass plate Fortuny and for these people it lives, it survives. It too is important.

This was not what I had expected to find. I still ponder the question of Fortuny the innovator. When Mariano Fortuny died in 1949 he left approximately 5,000 designs. Some of these are still being produced. It is a reproduction of something from the past. It is not taking into account the life, the forms of today, or the advantages produced by technology.

I was not allowed into the factory nor will I be. I fancy I know how those textiles are produced; this is unimportant. I admire the skill of technicians. I wish a new and growing, changing designer of today could have the advantages of those artisans and their technical skill. I believe that if Mariano Fortuny were still alive it would not be a mere reproduction of that storehouse of 5,000 designs. Perhaps he would be designing new, of-tomorrow textiles with the nostalgia, the patina, of former periods but with an awareness of today and the technology of today. There would be evidence of change. Perhaps I am the dreamer, for after all Mariano Fortuny was trained in the Beaux Arts tradition, he was the museum curator in charge of the Titian paintings. Maybe his vista was only for the unliving past but I think not. Remember that pleated dress and the little bag to put it in.

Katherine Westphal (Roszbach)
circa 1973

Appendix C

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

KATHERINE WESTPHAL
 2715 Belrose Avenue
 Berkeley, CA 94705 (415) 845-6295

Biographical Information

Born: Los Angeles, California 1919
 Education: University of California, Berkeley, BA and MA
 Teacher: University of California, Davis
 Professor of Design (Emeritus 1979)

Recent Exhibitions

Surface Design--New Directions, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Summer 1978
 American Crafts in the Vatican, Rome, Italy, June 1978
 On Fabric, Security Pacific Bank Gallery, Los Angeles, California, March 1979
 Art for Use, American Craft Museum, New York, Spring 1980; also at Winter Olympics, Lake Placid, New York
 Fibers 81, de Saisset Museum, University of Santa Clara, California, January-March 1981
 Recent Work: Surface Design, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, April 1981
 Nouvelle Vannerie, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Lausanne, Switzerland, June-September 1981
 Good as Gold, Alternative Materials in American Jewelry, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., December 1981
 Beyond Tradition, American Craft Museum, New York, October 1981-January 1982
 Artists' Books, Falkirk Art Center, San Rafael, California, 1982
 Poetry for the Body--Clothing for the Spirit, Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California, March-April 1983
 Art to Wear, American Craft Museum, New York, May-October 1983
 Paper to Wear, San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum, September 20-October 30, 1983

Works in Permanent Collections

American Craft Museum, New York City
 Trondheim Museum, Trondheim, Norway
 University of Nebraska, Lincoln
 Arizona State University, Tempe
 Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
 Hauberg Collection, Seattle, Washington

KATHERINE WESTPHAL (Cont'd)

One-Artist Exhibitions

Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York City
Museum West, San Francisco, California
University of California, Davis
Fiberworks, Berkeley, California
San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum, San Francisco

Book

Dragons and Other Creatures: Chinese Embroideries of the Ch'ing
Dynasty (Berkeley: Lancaster-Miller, 1979).

Grants and Awards

National Endowment for the Arts Craftsman's Grant 1977-78
Fellow of American Craft Council (Honorary)

Special Project

Program on Wearable Art for World Crafts Conference in Vienna,
July 1980, including preparation of slide kit for the
American Craft Council

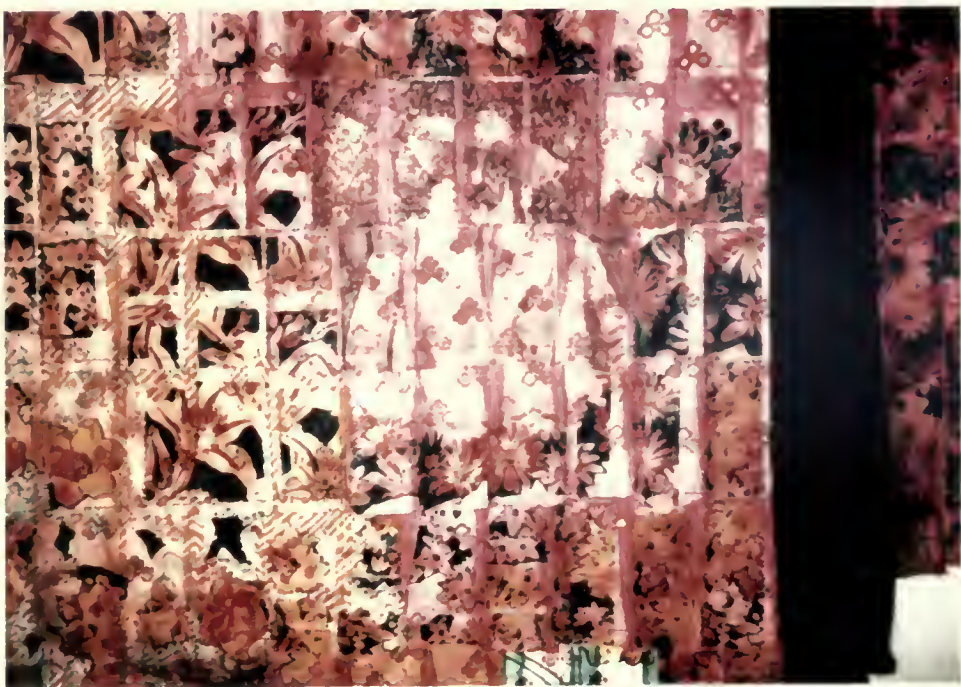
upper

1983 "Giverny II"

Handmade paper, dyed, stamped, patched: with color Xerox

lower

"Giverny II" detail



upper

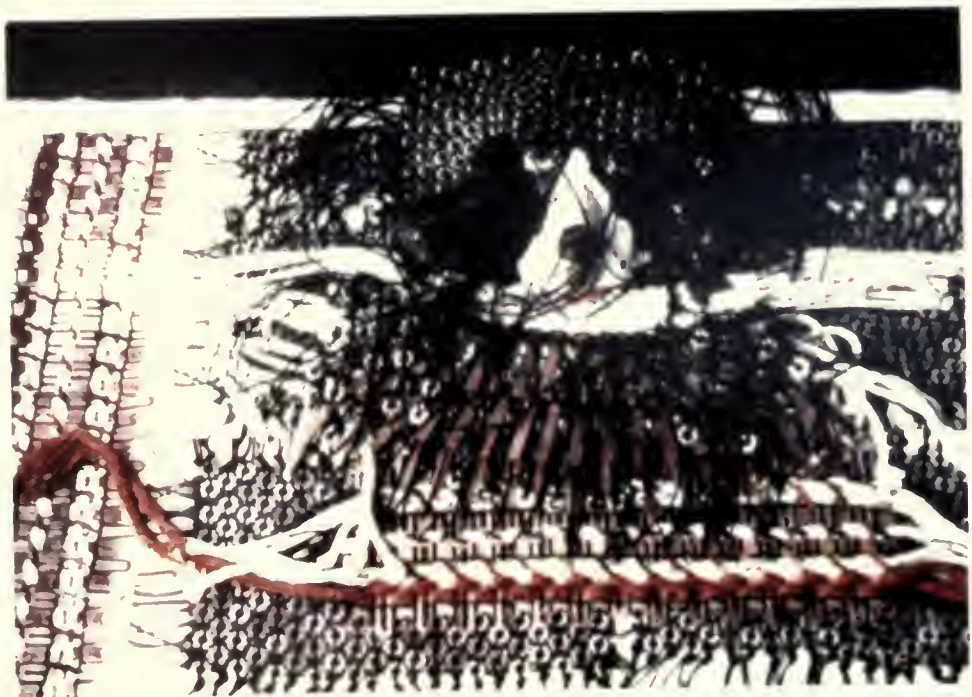
1984 "Samurai II"

Mixed media

lower

1984

Elements for Samurai works; mixed media



upper

1985 "Water Garden"

Japanese handmade paper dyed, stamped, patched: with color Xerox

center

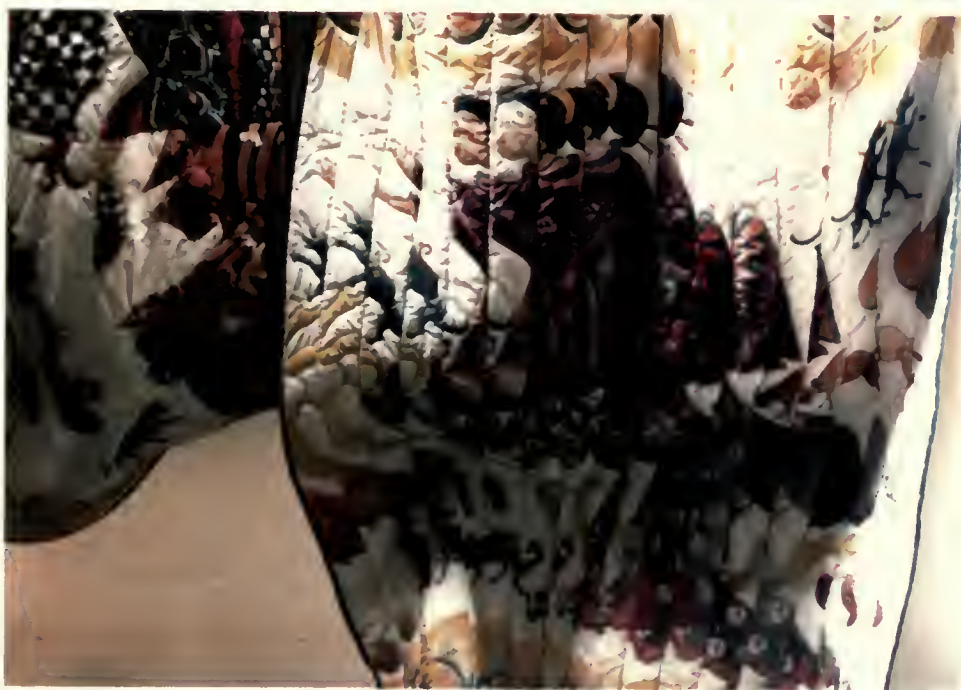
1976 "Puzzle of the Floating World" No. 1 and No. 2

Transfer print and quilting

lower

1979-80 Series: "Should Dogs Wear Kimono and Speak Japanese"

Drawing and color Xerox



upper left

1987 "Geisha"

Japanese handmade paper dyed, stamped, patched: with color Xerox

upper right

1980 "Pale Rainbow"

Panné velvet, transfer print

lower

1985 "Past Splendor"

Japanese handmade paper dyed, stamped, patched: color Xerox detail



upper

1978 "Blooming Desert"

Panné velvet, transfer print: with color Xerox

lower

"Blooming Desert" detail



upper left

1978 "Hawaiian Kitsch"

Panné velvet, transfer print: with color Xerox detail

upper right

1965 "Triennale"

Hand printed textiles, patched, appliqué, and quilting

lower

"Hawaiian Kitsch" detail



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Harriet Siegel Nathan

University of California at Berkeley alumna with two Journalism degrees: A.B. in 1941 and M.J. in 1965. Wrote for the on-campus paper, The Daily Californian ("Monarch of the College Dailies") as reporter, columnist, assistant women's editor, and managing editor.

Prepared President Sproul's biennial report to the Legislature, 1942-44; wrote advertising copy; edited house journals; served on local and state boards of the League of Women Voters primarily in local and regional government and publications. As a graduate student, wrote for the University's Centennial Record.

Worked as an interviewer/editor at the Regional Oral History Office part-time from the mid-sixties; concurrently served the Institute of Governmental Studies as Principal Editor doing editing, writing, research, production, and promotion of Institute publications. Wrote journal articles; and a book, Critical Choices in Interviews: Conduct, Use, and Research Role (1986) that included oral history interviews in the analysis.

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